Historical Materialism 196

Karl Kautsky on Democracy and Republicanism

Karl Kautsky

Edited and translated by Ben Lewis

BRILL

Karl Kautsky on Democracy and Republicanism

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By

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The publications by Karl Kautsky in this volume were originally published as:
– Karl Kautsky 1911, *Parlamentarismus und Demokratie*, 2nd edition, Stuttgart: J.H.W. Dietz.
– Karl Kautsky 1905, *Republik und Sozialdemokratie in Frankreich*, https://www.marxists.org/deutsch/archiv/kautsky/1905/frankreich/index.html.
– Karl Kautsky 1924, 'Das Werden eines Marxisten', reprinted in Benedikt Kautsky (ed.) 1954, *Ein Leben für den Sozialismus: Erinnerungen an Karl Kautsky*, Hannover: Dietz, pp. 11–44.

The drafts of the Erfurt programme are translated from the Appendix to Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey 1986, *Das Mandat des Intellektuellen: Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie*, Berlin: Wolf Jobst Siedler.

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available online at http://catalog.loc.gov
LC record available at http://lccn.loc.gov/2019031204

Typeface for the Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic scripts: "Brill". See and download: brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1570-1522
ISBN 978-90-04-33143-3 (hardback)
ISBN 978-90-04-39284-7 (e-book)

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Preface

Once deemed 'the pope of Marxism',[1] Karl Kautsky – a star pupil of Marx and Engels in his youth – was the leading theoretician behind the German Social Democratic Party's original course of decisive hostility and implacable opposition to the German Empire (1871–1918) and the capitalist state in general. He was also one of the most prolific public intellectuals of his time. Following the death of Engels in 1895, Kautsky came to be viewed by friend and foe alike as the most important Marxist thinker of the age. He not only made significant contributions to the theoretical development of Marxism, but also popularised Marxist ideas, bringing them to a much wider international audience than either Marx or Engels was ever in a position to reach.[2] Kautsky was, moreover, a key actor when the question of state power was posed to the forces of German social democracy for the first time: during the dissolution of the war-weary Imperial state and the emergence of the Weimar Republic. His literary and political activity can accordingly be viewed as an important piece in the mosaic of social-democratic writing on the German Empire in particular and on the state and civil society in general. However, despite his once exalted status as a champion of Marxism in its golden age, there is little interest in Kautsky's work today. In the past quarter of a century, only eight German- and English-language studies devoted to his ideas have appeared (and five of these focus less on the detail of his political philosophy than on his practical-political influence). In the recent past, more of his correspondence has been published,[3] but the overwhelming majority of his letters, papers and drafts remains neglected in the Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis in Amsterdam.

This book aims to rekindle interest in Kautsky's ideas by exploring one central aspect of his thought – his democratic-republican understanding of state and society.

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1 The term appears to have first been used in 1894 by one of Kautsky's political opponents in the German workers' movement, the trade unionist Georg Ledebour. Cf. Macnair (ed.) 2013, p. 7.

2 According to the Austrian social democrat Friedrich Stampfer, Kautsky's popular exposition of Marxist economic theory, *The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx* (Kautsky 1936 [1887]), opened the door to many young socialists wishing to study 'not only Marx's teachings, but political economy in general'. Its popularity led the young Austrian Marxist Victor Adler to joke that an excellent commentary on Kautsky's book had already been published … *Capital*, Volume 1. See Kautsky (ed.) 1954, p. 50.

3 Schelz-Brandenburg (ed.) 2003 and 2011; Görtz (ed.) 2011.

My introductory outline of Kautsky's democratic-republican thought will be composed of four main sections. It will first provide a short overview of Kautsky's life and work and then discuss the development of research on Kautsky over the past one hundred years, tracing the key trends and advances in the study of his life and work and outlining the main reasons behind the marginalisation of his thought. Second, it will evaluate the democratic foundations of Kautsky's republicanism through a discussion of the SPD's Erfurt Programme of 1891, which he co-authored and which pithily outlines the aims and principles of the social-democratic movement in Germany, and *Parliamentarism, Direct Legislation by the People and Social Democracy* (1893), in which he develops his views on parliament and modern democracy. On this basis, it will then consider how Kautsky's interpretation of democracy feeds into his republican conception of political thought. The material on which this chapter is based will be Kautsky's series of articles *The Republic and Social Democracy in France* (1905), which has been almost completely ignored in the secondary literature. Finally, some concluding thoughts will be offered.

My discussion of Kautsky's democratic republicanism will be followed by the first English-language translations of *Parliamentarism, Direct Legislation by the People and Social Democracy* and *The Republic and Social Democracy in France*. In order to provide an overview of how Kautsky viewed his own intellectual development, the volume also includes my translation of his autobiographical essay, *The Development of a Marxist* (1924). Finally, my translation of the pivotal[4] Erfurt programme and its various drafts has been appended to the volume.

Besides providing a distinct contribution to the study of Kautsky's life and work and helping to correct the general – and, as we shall see, fairly negative – consensus on his status as a theorist, this publication is motivated by a desire to explore the ideological relationship between Marxism and democracy through the eyes of an important partisan of both. For some, such as the esteemed

4 Writing in 1899, Lenin gave a resounding endorsement of the programme: 'We are not in the least afraid to say that we want to imitate the Erfurt Programme: there is nothing bad in imitating what is good, and precisely to day, when we so often hear opportunist and equivocal criticism of that programme, we consider it our duty to speak openly in its favour' (Lenin 1899). Twenty years later in 1919, when he was closing the debate on the new programme of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), he stated: 'We must take as our point of departure the universally recognised Marxist thesis that a programme must be built on a scientific foundation. It must explain to the people how the communist revolution arose, why it is inevitable, what its significance, nature, and power are, and what problems it must solve. Our programme must be a summary for agitational purposes, a summary such as all programmes were, such as, for instance, the Erfurt Programme was' (Lenin 1919).

historian William Carr, Marx and Engels disdained popular democracy. Carr contends that they thought 'universal suffrage would probably put another Napoleon in power'.[5] This study will contest such views by framing Kautsky's politics within what August J. Nimtz has described as Marx and Engels's unique contribution to 'the democratic breakthrough' of the nineteenth century,[6] or, to paraphrase the words of the *Communist Manifesto*, their effort to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class *so as* to win the battle of democracy.[7]

5 Carr 1991, p. 81.
6 Nimtz Jr. 2000.
7 Marx and Engels 1975–2004a.

Acknowledgements

The ideas of the Marxist thinker and activist Karl Kautsky (1854–1938) have almost been consigned to oblivion in scholarship and political discourse. However, following the completion of my BA in Germanic Studies at the University of Sheffield in 2007, I have had the good fortune of collaborating with some of the few scholars who are still working on his ideas and are looking at fresh material as well as revealing older texts, in an attempt to reassess the history of the European workers' movement. I wish to thank three such specialists in particular: Mike Macnair, Lars T. Lih and Daniel Gaido. Mike's excellent *Revolutionary Strategy: Marxism and the Challenge of Left Unity*,[1] as well as his tremendous knowledge of social-democratic history, prompted me to take a closer look at the so-called 'Marxist Centre' around Kautsky. Mike also lent me his copy of Lars T. Lih's *Lenin Rediscovered: 'What Is to be Done?' in Context*,[2] which I read in one rather long sitting during a camping holiday in West Wales in the summer of 2008. This book transformed my understanding of both Lenin and Kautsky and inspired me to work more closely on the latter. Ever since bumping into each other at the Marxism Festival in London that same summer, Lars Lih and I have struck up an excellent working relationship. I have never met Daniel Gaido, who is based in Argentina, but was immediately impressed with his translations of Kautsky's writings on Russia.[3] We have regularly discussed by email various aspects of German social democracy, and he has always kindly offered his advice and assistance in matters relating to my work. I hope that my cooperation with Lars, Mike and Daniel will continue into the future, for there is still much work to do.

My cooperation with Mike and Lars in particular has led to two book publications (*Zinoviev and Martov: Head-to-Head in Halle*;[4] *Karl Kautsky on Colonialism*),[5] and, in addition, I have published several academic translations of Kautsky's works, as well as extended articles in publications such as *Weekly Worker*, *Critique: Journal of Socialist Theory* and *Revolutionary History*. Thanks go to Peter Manson and John Bridge (*Weekly Worker*), Yassamine Mather and Hillel Ticktin (*Critique*) and Ted Crawford and Ian Birchall (*Revolutionary History*) for encouraging me to publish my work with them. The Editorial Board of *His-*

1 Macnair 2008.
2 Lih 2008.
3 Cf. Gaido and Day (eds.) 2011.
4 Lewis and Lih (eds.) 2011.
5 Macnair (ed.) 2013.

torical Materialism and comrade Sebastian Budgen in particular have ensured that my MA dissertation on Kautsky and the translation work I have conducted in the past three or four years could be collated in a single volume: I am most indebted to them for encouraging me to see the project through to the end, as well as to Danny Hayward for his meticulous proofreading. For pointing out to me a wealth of social-democratic material from this period, I must also thank Noa Rodman and Andrew Bonnell. Maciej Zurowski, as usual, answered my numerous questions regarding *knifflige* German phrases and translation issues.

When I returned to academia in September 2014, my supervisors Peter Thompson and Henk de Berg were extremely helpful in teaching me how best to express my knowledge and experience of working on Kautsky. I would like to thank them both for their support and guidance and for our excellent three-way discussions of German intellectual thought. I am particularly indebted to Henk de Berg for helping me to highlight more clearly where I take over the insights of existing Kautsky research or try to go beyond it. He has also patiently taught me the importance of the Dutch expression *Schrijven is weglaten*, and spent much of his time going through my drafts and unsplitting my infinitives: I shall endeavour always to avoid splitting them in the future. I must also thank the White Rose Network for providing a fee-waiver for my MA thesis, which forms a chapter of this volume, and the Wolfson Foundation for funding my PhD on the political thought of Oswald Spengler (1880–1936).

The completion of this book has been dependent on my family and friends. I must thank my mother for all she has done for me in the recent past and across my whole life. I am a very fortunate and grateful son. Since completing this book, my father has come back into my life and I am incredibly proud of him for what he has achieved. The love and warmth of my Iranian family (the '5+1', as we call ourselves) has also been a constant inspiration.

I would also like to thank Tina Becker, Lee Rock and Emmalein for allowing me to stay with them during tough times as an MA student, as well as Louise Dyason and Jamie Tedford for their warmth and hospitality – always cheering me up when things got rough.

This book would not have been possible without the encouragement, support and love of my wife, Anahita. Not only has she constantly pushed me to return to academia, she has selflessly supported me and shown her typical strength and courage during what has occasionally been a tough couple of years, with several prolonged absences from each other due to the inhumane idiosyncrasies of current immigration laws. I cannot thank you enough, Anahita. Last but not least, I must mention our beautiful daughter, Clara Yildiz, who has recently arrived in the world and who brings us both so much happiness.

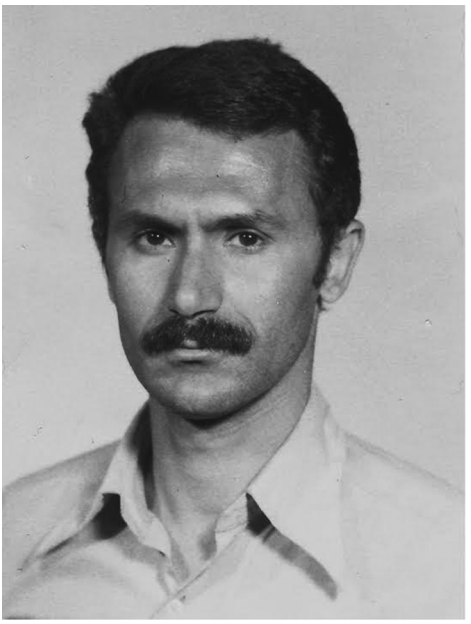

FIGURE 1 Mohammad Ali Partovi (1947–88)

I would like to dedicate this publication to the memory of Mohammad Ali Partovi (1947–88), a leftist activist who was executed in one of the Islamic Republic of Iran's jails in 1988. As all books were quickly confiscated during his time in prison, he spent months upon end as part of a collective prisoner project to copy, illegally and by hand, a Farsi translation of Kautsky's classic *Foundations of Christianity*.[6] His story puts the hard work on this project somewhat into perspective, and also underlines how the struggle for democracy and political freedom, a *leitmotif* of Kautsky's work, continues to this day, both in Europe and around the world.

6 Kautsky 2007 [1908].

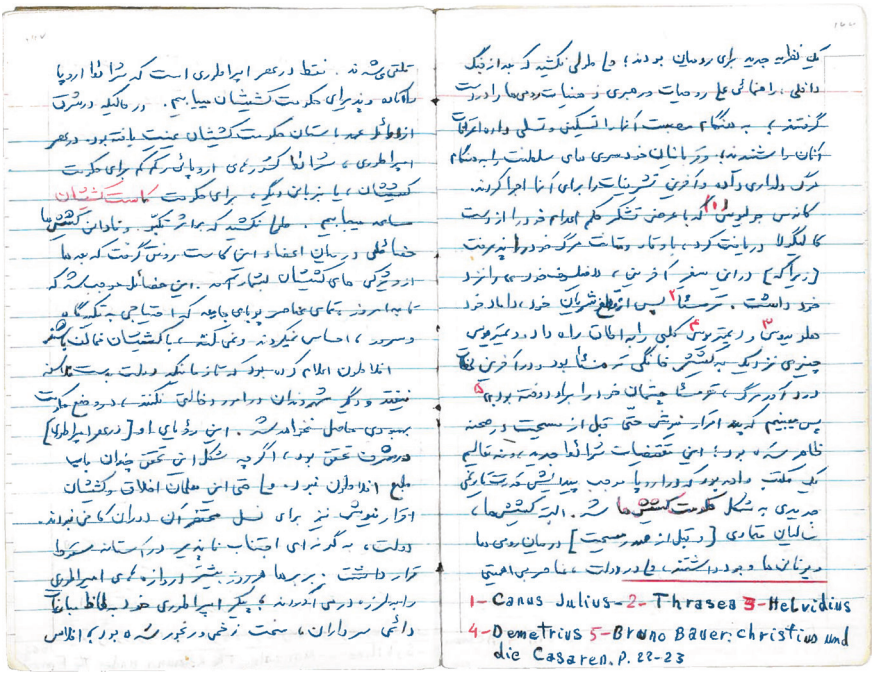

FIGURE 2 One of the handwritten pages copied in prison by Mohammad Ali Partovi

INTRODUCTION

Karl Kautsky's Democratic Republicanism

A Forgotten Legacy

Born in 1854 in Prague to a Czech father and a German mother, Kautsky became a member of Austrian social democracy as a student in Vienna in January 1875. He became a Marxist after reading Friedrich Engels's *Anti-Dühring*.[1] As a keen disciple who was eager to learn, he went to visit Marx and Engels in London in 1881, discovering more about their work habits and theoretical study while striking up a close friendship with Engels, which would last until the latter's death in 1895.[2] In 1883, Kautsky set out on an ambitious path. Convinced that the workers' movement needed to be rooted in the most advanced insights of *Wissenschaft*, of knowledge and theory, he founded his own newspaper, *Die Neue Zeit*. It was devoted to developing a Marxist analysis of an astounding range of topics and controversies, from alcohol to the Anabaptists, colonialism to Carthage, genetics to gender. Against the backdrop of the growing support for international socialism (apparent from the founding of the Socialist Second International – a federation of nationally based socialist and labour parties – in 1889[3] and the cessation of the German Empire's Anti-Socialist Law in 1890), his magazine became a weekly, with a growing readership and influence. Through Kautsky's connections to Marx's literary testament via Engels, the magazine also published several Marxist classics for the first time, such as the 'Randglossen zum Programm der deutschen Arbeiterpartei' (known in English as *The Critique of the Gotha Programme*).[4] Kautsky's editorship of this magazine allowed him to gain a wider audience for his ideas and to shape the political strategy of the largest political party within Germany.

Die Neue Zeit was studied and discussed far beyond the boundaries of the German Empire and exerted an international influence which belies the rather limited means of communication and transportation of the time. For Friedrich

1 Engels 1959.

2 Their correspondence can be found in Engels and Kautsky 1955.

3 The international organisation in which Kautsky was a leading actor is called the *Second* International because it was founded following the dissolution of the International Workingmen's Association (1864–76), which represented the first successful attempt to unite various working-class organisations on an international basis.

4 Marx 1891 [1875].

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Adler, the Austrian socialist best known for his assassination of Count Karl von Stürgkh in 1916 in a protest against the Count's enthusiastic support for World War I, *Die Neue Zeit* was 'the thread which linked together the socialists of all countries' and the 'intellectual centre of German socialism and international Marxism'.[5] Moira Donald notes how the publication also 'played a multifaceted role during the formative period of Russian Marxism', serving as a 'platform for discussion of Russian affairs which the Russian Social Democratic press could not itself provide during this period'.[6] The French labour historian Georges Haupt has minutely detailed the reception of the publication, as well as of Kautsky's work more generally, in the Balkans, while recent historical research has uncovered how Kautsky was a known name in countries such as Iran, with aspiring social democrats there asking him for his views on political and strategic matters.[7] It was precisely through his ideas on these questions that Kautsky gained international significance. His breakthrough as a theoretician came in 1891, when he wrote the theoretical section of the party's Erfurt Programme. The commentary he wrote on this programme[8] is perhaps the most widely read and most influential Marxist text of the period.[9]

Kautsky never merely recycled and repeated the teachings of Marx and Engels. He was an original thinker in his own right, seeking to apply the methods of his heroes to his own time. Occasionally, this involved updating their prognoses on matters such as agricultural development, something which formed the basis of his 1899 *The Agrarian Question*.[10] He also was the editor of what is generally seen as Volume IV of Marx's *Capital* and the author of an impressive number of historical and theoretical works. Between 1883 and 1918, he wrote nearly forty books, about five hundred journal articles and well over three hun-

5 Cf. Benedikt Kautsky (ed.) 1954, p. 55.

6 Donald 1993, p. 5.

7 Haupt 1986, pp. 48–80. The Bremen-based historian Till-Schelz Brandenburg notes that Lenin's study, which has been preserved through to today as a museum, boasts a complete collection of the journal (Schelz-Brandenburg n.d.); Cf., for example, Kautsky's correspondence with a small group of social democrats from Tabriz in Chaqueri (ed.) 2010, pp. 123–8. The Kautsky archive in the Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis in Amsterdam boasts a huge collection of such exchanges with thinkers from around the world. An overview of this repository is available online at: http://search.socialhistory.org/Record/ARCH00712/ArchiveContentList#1980.

8 Kautsky 1971 [1892].

9 The astounding number of editions and translations of this work are listed in Werner Blumenberg's book-length overview of Kautsky's various writings. See Blumenberg 1960, pp. 47–8.

10 An English translation of this work is available: Kautsky 1988 [1899].

dred newspaper items. His work was translated into over twenty languages.[11] Kautsky came to be viewed as a guiding theoretical light for a mass movement of millions.

Even those in the workers' movement who later fell out with Kautsky were often full of praise for his early works. And in the German Reichstag, Prince Heinrich von Bülow alluded to Kautsky's influence by warning the deputies present that the latter's 1902 *The Social Revolution*[12] was the 'travel guide' for the socialist state of the future.[13] Kautsky never held a formal position in the SPD, but through the medium of *Die Neue Zeit* was able to intervene directly in the many party controversies in the years leading up to World War I.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Kautsky fought fiercely with his erstwhile friend and comrade Eduard Bernstein, who had embraced the revisionist idea that socialism in Germany could be introduced through reforms alone. In 1904, in the aftermath of this dispute, Kautsky chided his comrades in the French socialist movement for entertaining the illusion that the bourgeois French Third Republic somehow embodied a constitutional order in which socialism could be realised.[14] But Kautsky also found himself in conflict with the left wing of the party, such as in his polemics with Rosa Luxemburg over the role and importance of the mass strike as part of social democracy's tactical arsenal in 1910.[15]

In addition, Kautsky was central to the inner-party controversy over the question of how to respond to the outbreak of World War I. Attending a meeting of the SPD's Reichstag deputies on 3 August 1914, the day before the first vote on war credits, Kautsky urged his comrades to abstain in the vote. But the Reichstag fraction, of which Kautsky was not a member and in which he did not have voting rights, agreed to support the war credits. Kautsky went along with the party's decision but was criticised by many in the movement for his refusal to break organisationally with the *Burgfrieden* socialists in his party – those who sought civil peace with the German regime in the name of national unity during the war. His opposition to the pro-war majority in the party nonetheless ensured that he was removed from his post as editor of *Die Neue Zeit* in 1917. Following this, Kautsky joined the anti-war SPD splinter group, the Independent Social Democrats (*Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, or USPD), but his influence in the movement was already on the

11 Cf. Kautsky 1994, p. 2.
12 Kautsky 1903 [1902].
13 Cf. Kautsky (ed.) 1954, p. 25.
14 Cf. Part Two of this volume.
15 Kautsky 1910.

wane: the momentum of the Marxist movement was shifting from Germany to Russia. And although Kautsky had greeted the Russian Revolution of 1905 with enthusiasm and had written favourably on the possibility of tentative moves towards socialist production in Russia in April 1917,[16] his criticism of the October Revolution was far more vehement than that of many to his right in the workers' movement. This opposition led to a number of stinging polemics with several Bolshevik leaders.

During the November Revolution, Kautsky took on two minor roles. He initially acted as a USPD representative to the Foreign Office, where he had little impact on the decisions made by the officials and was sent off to investigate historical documents on the origins of World War I. He then sat on the socialisation commission, which was designed to investigate which areas of industry could be nationalised. His ambitions were once again thwarted, however, for the commission produced hardly any results: the SPD members insisted that socialisation was impossible in a devastated post-war Germany and delayed any concrete economic measures on that basis.[17]

As the revolutionary years unfolded, Kautsky became increasingly isolated in the USPD. When the party decided to merge with the pro-Moscow Communist Party (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, or KPD) in October 1920, he almost withdrew from politics altogether. In the last two decades of his life, he had a negligible impact on political life, despite rejoining the SPD and contributing to the discussions around its Heidelberg Programme, which was agreed in 1925.

Kautsky died in Amsterdam in 1938, leaving behind a wealth of Marxist material. A vast amount of unpublished book manuscripts, particularly from his later years, can be found in the Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis in Amsterdam. His most influential publications include his aforementioned commentary on the Erfurt programme (known in English under the title of its – savagely abridged – translation, *The Class Struggle*);[18] *The Economic Doctrines of Karl Marx*, a popular introduction to *Capital*, Volume I;[19] *Forerunners of Modern Socialism*,[20] an impressive overview of the idea of socialism from Plato to modernity; *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*, a discussion of eth-

16 See Kautsky 2010 [1917].

17 Kautsky himself stresses that the commission did come up with important proposals. Cf. Section X of his *The Development of a Marxist* in Part Three of this volume.

18 Kautsky 1910 [1892].

19 Kautsky 1936 [1887].

20 Kautsky 1895. An abridged English-language translation in Kautsky 1897 [1895].

ics and neo-Kantianism;[21] and the summary of his views on world history, *The Materialist Conception of History*, which was first published in 1927.[22]

Kautsky's Reception

Today, Karl Kautsky is largely forgotten. Historians, Germanists and philosophers know him, if at all, for his polemics against the young Bolshevik regime or as the 'renegade' in Lenin's *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*,[23] which pillories Kautsky for his wavering stance in opposing World War I, his outright hostility to the Russian Revolution of 1917 and his strategic conceptions regarding the German Revolution of 1918. Moreover, the relatively few specialists who are familiar with his work tend to have a rather negative view of it. Even scholars who consider themselves Marxists or sympathetic to Marxism, such as Stephen Eric Bronner, often reject much of Kautsky's thought. Thus Bronner asserts that 'Kautsky's Marxism was never dialectical, [but] always mechanistic' and that this thought prevented him 'from calling the bourgeois state and the existing modes of sociopolitical organization into question'.[24]

Kautsky's authority as a Marxist theoretician has been seriously in doubt ever since Lenin's angered accusations. Indeed, anecdote has it that not only Lenin's critique of Kautsky, but also the very title of his anti-Kautsky pamphlet, has moulded historical consciousness. The Kautsky scholar Hans-Josef Steinberg, for instance, recalls – or claims to recall – hearing from his colleague Georges Haupt that at various history conferences across the globe in the 1970s and 1980s Haupt had met students and academics who actually thought that Kautsky's forename was Renegade.[25] Kautsky's grandson John mentions similar reactions at being introduced to others at conferences and receptions.[26]

Be that as it may, Lenin's choice of the term *renegade* is worth bearing in mind when considering the representation of Kautsky's legacy. For to call somebody a renegade is to assert that this somebody, for whatever reason, has *reneged* on, or turned away from, what he once held dear, not that everything he once held dear was useless from the outset. Seen in this light, Lenin's charge

21 Kautsky 1907 [1906].
22 Kautsky (ed.) 1988.
23 Lenin 1919a.
24 Bronner 1982, p. 596.
25 Rojahn, Schelz-Brandenburg and Steinberg (eds.) 1992, p. 19. As the Russian language does not use articles, the original title of Lenin's pamphlet was *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia i renegat Kautskiĭ*.
26 Kautsky 1994, p. 45.

against Kautsky is *not* that the latter had always been a traitor to the cause of socialism, but that at a certain point he had flinched back from the perspectives he had formulated earlier. Indeed, following the outbreak of World War I, Lenin recommended to a comrade that he should 'Obtain without fail and reread (or ask to have it translated for you) *Road to Power* by Kautsky [and see] what he writes there about the revolution of our time! And now, how he acts the toady and disavows all that'.[27] Lenin tried to explain Kautsky's renegacy in the realm of *politics*. Clara Zetkin, a close friend of the Kautsky family in Stuttgart, took the same position. In 1920, she wrote:

> Nobody disputes Kautsky's great and enduring service of teaching the most advanced workers the ABC of scientific socialism, of historical materialism. Nor does anybody dispute that he fought to shed further light on Marx's world of thought, to develop this thought and to make a cadre of advanced proletarian fighters feel at home within it. But it is precisely this which makes his 'fall from grace' all the more inexcusable.[28]

Later on in the 1920s, however, many of those writing in defence of the Russian Revolution and against Kautsky, such as Karl Korsch and Georg Lukács, sought to locate Lenin's split with Kautsky *philosophically*, not in the realm of particular political choices. Jules Townshend has helpfully coined the term 'the neo-Hegelian interpretation' for this approach, which has exerted a huge influence on the Western Marxist understanding of Kautsky.[29] For Korsch and Lukács, Kautsky's errors lay in his philosophical development and his articulation of a purportedly positivistic, Darwinist vulgar-Marxism,[30] which reduced human consciousness to an expression of economic interests and downplayed the role of active human agency in bringing about socialist revolution, with Kautsky assuring his followers that they could sit by and wait for the revolution to ripen almost like a natural process.[31]

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27 Cf. Lih 2014, p. 366.

28 Zetkin 1920, pp. 9–10.

29 Townshend 1989, pp. 659–64.

30 Kautsky's response to Korsch, which focuses on what he sees as some of Korsch's brash exaggerations and crudities, appears to have been consigned to historical oblivion. I translated this response into English in 2012, almost 90 years after it was first published. See Kautsky 2012.

31 This reading of Kautsky dovetailed with the notion, prevalent in academic circles, that Engels himself was responsible for the flattening and simplification of Marxism, removing its dialectical edge. The classic account of this is in Leszek Kolakowski's three-volume history of Marxism (Kolakowski 1978). His important chapters on Kautsky and what he

The real break between Lenin and Kautsky, according to this view, occurred when Lenin, angry at Kautsky and the political capitulation of the Second International in the face of war, re-read Hegel and abandoned the non-dialectical, Kautsky-inspired world outlook he had once held dear. This view became influential in German academia following the publication of *Kautsky und der Kautskyanismus* in 1928 by the prominent historian Erich Matthias. For Matthias, Kautsky's verbal radicalism was a mere façade for the SPD's political passivity and quietism, which paved the way for the SPD's gradual integration into the structures of the German Empire, as expressed most clearly in the *Burgfrieden* policies of August 1914.[32]

The gulf between Kautsky and Lenin was widened even further with the rise of Stalinism in Russia. Basing itself on an ahistorical and quasi-religious cult of Lenin, Stalinist historical output contended that the views of Kautsky and those of Bolshevism were worlds apart. As Stalin himself put it in his notorious *Short Course* of 1939: '*The Party strengthens itself by purging its ranks of opportunist elements* – that is one of the maxims of the Bolshevik Party, which is a party of a new type fundamentally different from the Social Democratic parties of the Second International'.[33] The corollary of this approach was the marginalisation of Kautsky's ideas in the Eastern bloc. In the early Soviet Union, there were still plans to produce a multi-volume collection of Kautsky's pre-1914 works in Russian translation. In 1923, the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow decided to publish the most important works of the 'early Kautsky', for which Lenin had such praise, in a series of publications. Fourteen volumes were planned, but by 1930 only four had actually been published. With the removal of the independent-minded David Ryazanov from the Institute, the project collapsed altogether.[34] Trotsky's criticism – in his short obituary of Kautsky written in 1938 – of the Stalinist marginalisation of Kautsky is essentially correct:

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terms the 'golden age' of Marxism in the Second International also make claims along these lines (ibid., vol. 2, pp. 1–57).

32 Matthias 1957 [1928].

33 Stalin 1939, *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (*Bolsheviks*)*: Short Course*, Moscow: International Publishers, p. 142. The Lenin cult is expressed in these comments: 'However, these brilliant ideas of Marx [on the necessity of an alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry – BL] were not developed subsequently in the works of Marx and Engels, while the theoreticians of the Second International did their utmost to bury them and consign them to oblivion. To Lenin fell the task of bringing these forgotten ideas of Marx to light and restoring them to their full rights' (ibid., p. 75).

34 Werner Blumenberg suggests that the plan for the publication of these works may have even contributed to Ryazanov's removal (Blumenberg 1960, p. 9).

> The attempts of the present historiography of the Comintern to present things as if Lenin, almost in his youth, had seen in Kautsky an opportunist and had declared war against him, are radically false. Almost up to the time of the world war, Lenin considered Kautsky as the genuine continuator of the cause of Marx and Engels.[35]

In the West meanwhile, and alongside the neo-Hegelian interpretation, a school of thought came into existence which was essentially a mirror image of the Stalinist interpretative framework. The only major difference was that this school of thought placed minus signs where the Stalinist school placed plus signs and *vice versa*. A huge literature emerged which basically agreed with the Stalinist approach: social democracy and Bolshevism, Kautsky and Lenin – it concluded – had little in common. To the extent that this literature engaged with Kautsky, its conclusion was the same as that of the Stalinists: the Czech-German thinker and the Russian revolutionary were worlds apart.[36]

Family connections also played a role in the Western interpretation of Kautsky. In 1954, one of Karl's sons, the Austrian social democrat Benedikt, produced a *Festschrift* to commemorate his father's 100th birthday, in which the close intellectual connections that existed between Kautsky and Lenin are almost completely ignored.[37] The work even contains two important essays by Russian Mensheviks Boris Nicolaevsky ('Karl Kautsky in Russia') and Raphael Abramovich ('Karl Kautsky and the Factional Struggle in Russian Social Democracy'), which argue that although Kautsky often publicly sided with Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the more time went on, the more it became clear that Kautsky was really on the side of Russian social democracy, not Bolshevik 'utopianism'.[38]

During the Cold War, a peculiar consensus thus emerged. From different angles, and for different reasons, the three main schools we have identified tend to suggest that Kautsky's views of democracy, organisation and revolutionary

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35 Trotsky 1938, pp. 50–1. Nonetheless, in this article and elsewhere, Trotsky *also* contributes to a different kind of marginalisation, along the lines of 'Lenin was fooled by Kautsky, his influence was a mistake of his youth' (something which also underplays Trotsky's own devoted remarks about Kautsky at various points in his early career). Following a speech by Lenin in Zurich in October 1914, for instance, Trotsky found it absurd that Lenin repeatedly called Kautsky a traitor in light of the latter's behaviour regarding German social democracy's approval of war credits; cf. Lih 2014a.

36 For a concrete example of this approach, cf. Abraham Ascher's essay on the intellectual relationship between Kautsky and Axelrod (Ascher 1967).

37 Benedikt Kautsky (ed.) 1954.

38 Ibid., p. 90.

change had little or nothing to do with the political practice of Russian Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The scholar John Kautsky, Kautsky's grandson, marks a milestone in the reception of his grandfather's ideas. While he takes as good coin the neo-Hegelian contention that Karl Kautsky had failed to grasp the Marxist dialectic sufficiently, John's work adds a new twist to the intellectual relationship between Kautsky and Lenin. Correctly noting how 'Lenin revered Karl Kautsky as an oracle of Marxist wisdom until 1914', John contends that the talk of a renegade Kautsky was the ideological expression of a real development in their relationship. There was indeed a 'drastic change', he argues, but this change was 'not in Kautsky, but in Lenin's view of Kautsky'.[39] This conclusion also drew on some important studies of Kautsky from the late 1960s to the 1980s, above all Hans-Josef Steinberg's *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie*,[40] Massimo Salvadori's *Kautsky e la rivoluzione socialista 1854–1938* (translated into English as *Kautsky and the Socialist Revolution 1854–1938*)[41] and Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey's *Das Mandat des Intellektuellen. Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie*.[42]

Steinberg's pivotal work was heavily influenced by Erich Matthias's argument concerning Kautsky's vulgarisation of Marxism, but diverged from Matthias by arguing that it is historically impermissible to equate Kautsky's views with the SPD as a whole: Kautsky often found himself in opposition to the party leadership and was increasingly isolated in the party during the years leading up to World War I.[43] Steinberg's argument also marked a welcome departure from neo-Hegelian studies such as that of Walter Holzheuer, which treat Kautsky's thought as a singular and static *Weltanschauung*.[44] Salvadori and Gilcher-Holtey took up Steinberg's approach by closely following the tensions and developments within Kautsky's thought at various points in his career. Salvadori's study makes the case that while Kautsky's thought changed significantly across his career, his views on the state, the role of bureaucracy and the question of political democracy 'remained remarkably constant'.[45] Against the orthodoxy of the Leninist-influenced left of the time, Gilcher-Holtey maintains that it is impermissible to talk of Kautsky as having reneged on his earlier ideas. While her overall case is weakened by the fact that, unlike Salvadori's, her

39 Kautsky 1994, p. 3.
40 Steinberg 1967.
41 Salvadori 1979.
42 Gilcher-Holtey 1986.
43 As also argued by Jürgen Rojahn (Rojahn 1992).
44 Holzheuer 1972.
45 Salvadori 1979, p. 12.

study finishes after 1910, her contention that 'Karl Kautsky is something better than the picture that has hitherto been painted of him'[46] reflected a desire to re-assess Kautsky's work.

Three other important studies which sought to re-evaluate Kautsky's legacy were published by Jukka Gronow, Dick Geary and Gary Steenson. Gronow's *On the Formation of Marxism: Karl Kautsky's Theory of Capitalism, the Marxism of the Second International and Karl Marx's Critique of Political Economy*[47] attempts to offer something new to Kautsky studies by providing a detailed overview of Kautsky's understanding of political economy, an understanding which, for Gronow, is based on a misreading of Marx's critique of the commodity form and the reification of social relations under capitalism. As Gronow puts it, under the influence of Kautsky (and, to a certain extent, Engels), 'Marxism came close to a radical version of natural rights theory. Capitalism was to be blamed because it did not respect the original right of the worker to his own products'. With regard to Kautsky's understanding of political action, however, Gronow's conclusions remain within the orbit of the neo-Hegelian approach:

> Despite his strong emphasis on the will and conscious activity of the proletariat as indispensable preconditions for the coming revolution, Kautsky's conclusions were deterministic: the very same development of capitalism that was expected to lead to an increasing polarisation of bourgeois society was just as automatically and inevitably expected to create the executor of the revolution, a revolutionary, socialist working class.[48]

Dick Geary's *Karl Kautsky*, an overview of Kautsky's life published as part of the 'Lives of the Left' series,[49] is perhaps the most accessible introduction to the man and his ideas. It provides a concise yet informative account of various tenets of Kautsky's thought, but is very much of its time in viewing Kautsky as a Darwinist thinker whose political thought boiled down to a fatalist 'recipe for "inaction" '. For Geary, this fatalist thought is a product of the peculiar 'stalemate in the German political scene before 1914', where the possibility of socialist revolution was as remote as that of a gradual transition into socialism within

46 Gilcher-Holtey 1986, p. 267.

47 Gronow 1986. Helpfully, this publication has recently been reprinted for the Historical Materialism Book Series (Gronow 2015).

48 Ibid., p. 235.

49 Geary 1987.

the confines of the *Kaiserreich*.[50] Kautsky's 'preconditions' for revolutionary upheaval were so 'exhaustive as to justify inaction even (or perhaps particularly) in revolutionary situations'.[51]

By contrast, Steenson's *Karl Kautsky, 1854–1938: Marxism in the Classical Years*[52] calls into question Kautsky's reputation as a determinist and evolutionist thinker by looking at Kautsky's relationship to Darwinism in particular. Fully aware of the enormous influence of Darwinism in Kautsky's intellectual climate, Steenson nonetheless contends that, while Kautsky had been a Darwinian in his *pre-Marxist* youth, *later* he was more than capable of distinguishing between social and natural laws of development; Kautsky's remarkably consistent political thought 'balanced between excessive emphasis on will and excessive emphasis on determinism'. Steenson nonetheless remained stuck within the neo-Hegelian interpretation: Kautsky's opposition to the revisionist right wing of the SPD, Steenson contends, gave 'his work a radical flavour that at times belied the moderation of his true position'.[53]

Following an academic conference dedicated to Kautsky in 1988, Hans-Josef Steinberg co-edited a volume on Kautsky, published in 1991, which provides a good picture of the state of Kautsky scholarship towards the end of the twentieth century. A variety of scholars from across the world contribute short and accessible chapters on a variety of aspects of Kautsky's life and ideas – from his understanding of fascism and his critique of the early Soviet Union to the crucial political role played by his wife, Luise Kautsky.[54] However, with the exception of one contribution by Moira Donald, whose ground-breaking research analyses Kautsky's proximity to Russian social democracy and the high esteem in which Kautsky was held by Lenin, Trotsky and others,[55] the contributions to this volume generally do not go beyond the conclusions of researchers such as Gronow, Geary and Steenson. These studies of Kautsky in the 1980s and early 1990s were new, ambitious and more positive towards Kautsky than the overwhelming majority of the discussions of his life and work during the Cold War in both East and West. But the continuing influence, and limitations of, the neo-Hegelian approach regarding Kautsky's thought are apparent in Kautsky studies at the end of the Cold War. The general consensus, which continues to be influential today, was that Kautsky was in fact a fairly moderate thinker

50 Ibid., p. 106; pp. 6–7.
51 Ibid., p. 85.
52 Steenson 1991.
53 Ibid., p. 102.
54 For more on Luise's life and thought, see Regneri 2013.
55 See Donald 1993.

whose regular deployment of Marxian terminology covered up an underlying reformism or even revisionism. Dick Geary summarises this consensus rather well. Kautsky, he claims, 'failed to combine a genuinely revolutionary prognosis with the advocacy of any form of concrete action'. Instead, Kautsky 'placed his faith in the workings of inexorable economic laws'. This faith in the objective development of economic laws accounts for the 'ambiguities of his theories and not least the distinction between a revolutionary analysis and an almost total silence on the issue of tactics'.[56]

It is only in the past ten years or so that a small group of scholars has begun to question this consensus. They view Kautsky not as the alleged renegade of 1914, not as the intransigently anti-Bolshevik campaigner after 1917 and not as the Darwinist determinist of Western Marxism, but as 'the genuine continuator of the cause of Marx and Engels' – to return to the Trotsky quote cited earlier. For these scholars, the accusations of Darwinism, fatalism and passivity are largely unfounded and a product of the complex history of Kautsky's reception outlined above.

Leading the way, the Canadian-based historian Lars T. Lih has challenged the dominant view of the Lenin-Kautsky relationship in his *Lenin Rediscovered: 'What Is to Be Done?' in Context*[57] and analysed the intimate links between Kautsky's political thought and Lenin's political practice, questioning Geary's neo-Hegelian assertion that 'it was through a critique of Kautskyite theory that younger Marxists, such as Lenin, Luxemburg and Lukács, came to develop a new revolutionary strategy'.[58] Rather, Lih contends, Lenin upheld the revolutionary strategy that Kautsky had helped to formulate and propagate.

For Lenin, it was *Kautsky* who broke with Kautsky. Alluding to an almost Freudian dimension to the whole affair, Lih claims that 'Lenin hated Kautsky because he loved Kautsky's books': Lenin was devastated that his intellectual father had failed to live up to the politics so clearly outlined in the writings, which were so influential on Lenin and various other revolutionaries in Russia.[59] Following his break with Kautsky, Lenin's thought was characterised by what Lih terms an 'aggressive unoriginality': *aggressive* in that Lenin was so scornful of Kautsky's *reneging* on the revolutionary perspectives he had out-

56 Geary 1982, p. 71; p. 93; p. 85.

57 Lih 2008.

58 Geary 1982, p. vii. We have already seen above how Lukács's critique of Kautsky was, in fact, quite different to Lenin's. For the purposes of this introduction, we must leave the question of Rosa Luxemburg's engagement with Kautsky to one side. For an overview of Luxemburg's republicanism during the November Revolution, see Lewis 2013.

59 Lih 2009, p. 3.

lined before World War I, and *unoriginal* in that Lenin claimed to stay true to these perspectives while many around him, including Kautsky, were abandoning them, with socialists across Europe concluding civil peace with their governments for the duration of the war.[60] To buttress his argument, Lih points to the many occasions between 1914 and 1924 when Lenin spoke or wrote of how lucidly Kautsky wrote or argued 'when he was a Marxist'.[61] Lih's approach thus rejects the *communis opinio* (to wit, that Kautsky's radical writing covered up an intrinsically reformist practice) by bridging the supposed gap between Lenin the daring revolutionary and Kautsky the armchair revolutionary.[62]

Similarly, Mike Macnair (*Revolutionary Strategy: Marxism and the Challenge of Left Unity*)[63] has re-assessed the Second International's 'centre', which positioned itself between the left, which favoured various forms of radical, 'direct' action, and the right, which was open to socialists joining capitalist governments in order to reform the system in the direction of socialism. The 'centre' around Kautsky and SPD Reichstag deputy August Bebel argued that the working class should build up its own forces and develop a strong opposition to the existing state. Now, much of the secondary literature shares Dick Geary's view that such a strategic outlook 'reflected the isolation and impotence of Social Democracy in Wilhelmine Germany. The promise of social revolution yet almost total silence on questions of daily tactics which characterised "centrism" could in fact keep people happy' by maintaining a false unity with the right. For Geary, this is one manifestation of Kautsky's '*mis*reading of Marx'.[64] Macnair, however, contends that such criticism is largely misplaced. Not only was Bolshevism itself a product of this school of thought around Kautsky, but in three main respects the Marxist centre embodied some of the central strategic ideas of Marx and Engels: first, the idea that the proletariat must develop its own organisations in the form of trade unions, cooperatives, cultural associations and political parties, all of which must be independent of the state; second, that a successful revolution must of necessity entail the 'self-liberation

60 Lih 2009a.

61 Helpfully, Lih has put together an exhaustive record of the numerous occasions, between 1914 and 1924, when Lenin spoke of 'Kautsky, *when he was a Marxist*' (Lih 2011).

62 See Lih 2008, pp. 82–110 for an excellent discussion of Kautsky's views on political leadership.

63 Macnair 2008.

64 Geary 1982, p. 11; p. vii. For another example of the view that Kautsky's strategy amounted to awaiting the dawn of socialism passively, see Lucio Colletti, who claims that the Second International exhibits a 'fatalistic' and 'providential' belief that socialist revolution would occur 'in a spontaneous, constant, and irreversible way, quite tranquilly like a natural process'; Colletti 1972, p. 105.

of the majority'; and third, that until such a time as the social-democratic party is able to implement its programme, it should display 'revolutionary patience' and form a strong opposition to the existing order.[65] While, as we shall see below, Macnair considers certain aspects of Kautsky's theory of the state to be highly problematical, he argues that some of these problems stem from the limitations of Marx and Engels's own work on the state: so in this respect too, Macnair says, Kautsky can be seen as the intellectual continuator of Marx and Engels.

Mike Macnair's relocation of Kautsky's strategic outlook sheds new light on Kautsky's controversial idea that social democracy is 'a revolutionary party, but not a party that makes revolution'.[66] This idea has invariably been viewed as incontrovertible proof of Kautsky's political passivity – the party has to wait for the revolution to come into existence[67] – but Macnair has a different view. Kautsky, he says, was simply asserting the basic Marxist principle that revolutions can only result from the conscious activity of the majority, not 'made' by small minorities. In Kautsky's own words:

> The concentration of capital sets the historical task: the introduction of a socialist social order. It produces the forces to accomplish this task, the proletarians, and it creates the means of doing so: social production. Yet it does not *solve* this task by itself, without further ado. This solution can only arise from the *consciousness*, the *will* and the *struggle* of the proletariat.[68]

Two other scholars who, by bringing to attention Kautsky's pre-1917 writings on Russia, have also contributed to the reassessment of his work, are Daniel Gaido and Richard B. Day (*Witnesses to Permanent Revolution: The Documentary Record*). They argue that Kautsky's early writings on Russia help 'to overcome the stereotypical and mistaken view of Kautsky as an apostle of quietism and a reformist cloaked in revolutionary phraseology.'[69] Published in *Die Neue Zeit* in the early 1900s, these writings – they say – reveal a thinker who emphasises the need for a political strategy for power which takes into account the driving forces behind the coming Russian Revolution and the need for

65 Macnair 2008, pp. 52–7 in particular.

66 Kautsky 1894, p. 368.

67 Cf. Bassler 1983, p. 294, where he writes: 'by suggesting that a socialist revolution could not be "made" but would "occur" ', Kautsky 'unwittingly stabilized the status quo'.

68 Kautsky 1899, Chapter 2.

69 Cf. Richard Day and Daniel Gaido (eds.) 2011, p. 569.

bold, decisive political leadership in order to overcome the underlying tensions between these forces. Their translations underline precisely how Kautsky rejected a fatalist scheme of historical development and how concerned he was with concrete tactical political questions. To cite one of the many passages by Kautsky they have translated in order to back up their argument:

> The world is not so purposely organized as to lead always to the triumph of the revolution where it is essential for the interest of society. When we speak of the necessity of the proletariat's victory and of socialism following from it, we do not mean that victory is inevitable or even, as many of our critics think, that it will take place automatically and with fatalistic certainty even when the revolutionary class remains idle. Necessity must be understood here in the sense of the revolution being the only possibility of further development.[70]

Recent scholarship marks a clear breakthrough in Kautsky studies. From different perspectives, Lars T. Lih, Mike Macnair, Richard Day and Daniel Gaido in particular have begun to overhaul the common – negative – conception of Kautsky by re-assessing the nature of his Marxism as well as his intellectual relationship to other important Marxist thinkers of his time. Their focus, however, is on just one of the issues which have dominated Kautsky scholarship: the guiding thread running through their work is Kautsky's impact on Russia and his political relationship with thinkers such as Lenin and Trotsky. The question of Kautsky's specific understanding of the *state and democracy* is yet to be tested against these new scholarly insights. This is where this publication comes in. Building on recent Kautsky scholarship, it aims to contribute to Kautsky studies in three ways.

First, while several of the studies from the 1980s and 1990s mentioned above have foregrounded Kautsky's understanding of the relationship between socialism and democracy, this study will be the first to focus solely on one major aspect of Kautsky's contribution to this field: his republicanism and his strategic conceptions of the democratic republic. I shall argue that Kautsky was a *republican* thinker not merely in the trite sense that he opposed the semi-absolutism of the *Kaiserreich* or that popular sovereignty should underpin modern government. Rather, he built upon the works of Marx and Engels to develop a particular brand of republican thought that – paradoxical as it may seem – defined itself in clear opposition to certain republican state forms, such

70 Ibid., p. 223.

as the French Third Republic (1870–1940) and the nineteenth-century American Republic. Kautsky deploys the term *democratic republic* to designate the conditions under which the working class, organised in the social-democratic party, could come to power and usher in the transition to a socialist society. This aspect of Kautsky's understanding of socialist revolution is neatly summarised in his *Road to Power*:

> We are revolutionaries, and are so not simply in the sense that the steam engine is revolutionary. The social transformation we strive for can only be attained through a political revolution, by means of the fighting proletariat conquering political power. And the sole state form in which socialism can be realised is the republic, the democratic republic.[71]

My thesis will investigate the specific content of this 'democratic republic' as part of Kautsky's understanding of democracy in the 1890s and early 1900s. In so doing, I will build on the recent work of the scholars mentioned above, but I will also question some of it, such as Mike Macnair's claim that what 'distinguished the centre tendency from post-1917 communists most fundamentally was the belief that the working class could take over and use the existing capitalist state bureaucratic apparatus'.[72]

Second, by analysing Kautsky's ideas on matters of state and society via his understanding of republicanism, I aim to question further the dominant notion that he is ambiguous when it comes to the form that his political revolution is to assume and how it is to be sustained.

Third, I shall do so in a manner that none of the recent literature on Kautsky has done – through a sole focus on some of his political writings. The primary, German-language source material analysed and translated in this publication – *Parliamentarism, Direct Legislation by the People* (1893/1911) and *The Republic and Social Democracy in France* (1905) – has been all but neglected in the existing secondary literature. Incorporating the arguments in these forgotten articles, and making them available to an English-language audience for the first time, will lead to a more nuanced appreciation of Kautsky's conception of democracy than the standard focus on his better-known works such as *The Social Revolution* and *The Road to Power* is able to.

71 Kautsky 1909, pp. 49–50 (translation modified).
72 Macnair 2008, p. 58.

The Democratic Foundations of Kautsky's Republicanism

Kautsky's breakthrough as an internationally respected Marxist thinker came in the early 1890s, following his role in helping to draft, and writing a celebrated commentary on, the SPD's Erfurt programme.[73] In line with the dominant view of Kautsky's Marxism, secondary literature often claims to detect a clear inconsistency within this programme – a worrying gulf between radical theory and cautious, or even passive, political practice. Thus, Mary Fulbrook states in her widely read *A Concise History of Germany*: 'In its new Erfurt programme of 1891, the SPD adopted a curious mixture of quite revolutionary principles (drafted by Karl Kautsky) and moderate programme (drafted by the revisionist Eduard Bernstein)'.[74] This notion of a 'curious mixture' can also be found among Kautsky scholars. Dick Geary, for instance, contends that the Erfurt programme contains two mutually exclusive parts: a revolutionary section on the need for socialism, and 'short-term demands for democratic reform' – without any obvious connection between the two.[75] Such views appear to be influenced by the work of Erich Matthias, who sees in the Erfurt programme evidence of 'crypto-revisionism' as the theoretical basis for what he views as the SPD's integration into the *Kaiserreich* – the very political entity the party had sworn to oppose intransigently. While the SPD in general and Kautsky in particular formally deployed revolutionary-sounding Marxist concepts and ideology, Matthias maintains, the actual content of their politics was reformist and evolutionist in nature.[76] The late Trotskyist historian Pierre Broué similarly argues that the Erfurt programme created a 'dichotomy' between a socialist revolution and

73 Kautsky 1910 [1892]. According to the Georgian socialist Noe Zhordania, only after reading Kautsky's commentary was it possible to call oneself a social democrat; cf. Benedikt Kautsky (ed.) 1954, p. 98. Lars T. Lih points out that Lenin translated two Marxist texts from German into Russian in his youth, Marx and Engels's *Das kommunistische Manifest* and Kautsky's *Das Erfurter Programm*. See Lih 2008, p. 41.

74 Fulbrook 1990, p. 134. Fulbrook erroneously ascribes this purported gulf between revolutionary theory and reformist practice to the political differences between Kautsky, the orthodox Marxist, and Bernstein, the revisionist socialist. However, it was only in 1898 that Bernstein became a revisionist. When he helped to draft the Erfurt programme, he was still considered, and considered himself, to be an orthodox Marxist. Bernstein's later revisionism is therefore irrelevant to his role in drafting the Erfurt programme. It should also be noted that neither of the programme's sections were entirely written by Kautsky or Bernstein alone. See the various drafts of the programme translated in the Appendix of this volume.

75 Geary 1982, p. 3.

76 Matthias 1957 [1928], p. 168.

'partial aims and political, economic and social reforms', which 'was to dominate the theory and practice of social democracy for decades'.[77]

This chapter will challenge these conceptions of the Erfurt programme by building on and developing some of the most recent literature on Kautsky, which has highlighted both the direct intellectual influence of Marx and Engels in the evolution of the Erfurt programme and the strategic thrust of its structure and demands.[78] In so doing, I will provide a brief overview of how Kautsky understood democracy as, in the famous words of Abraham Lincoln, the rule 'of the people, by the people, for the people'. I shall make the case that, for Kautsky, the struggle for more extensive representative political forms in state and society forms the strategic bridge between existing society and the socialist state of the future. Let us first take a closer look at the programme's organisation and its place in Kautsky's thought.

The Erfurt Programme

Agreed upon unanimously at the party's Erfurt Congress in 1891 after extensive discussion at all levels of the SPD, the Erfurt programme's buoyant and confident tone is reflective of an organisation which had recently emerged out of illegality following the expiry of Otto von Bismarck's Anti-Socialist Law in 1890 and which was growing quickly. In London, an ageing Friedrich Engels enthused that the programme largely reflected the victory of the ideas he and Marx had developed over the course of their lives: 'The present draft differs very favourably from the former programme',[79] namely the party's Gotha Programme of 1875, which, in the eyes of Marx and Engels, had made far too many unprincipled concessions to the supporters of Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64).

Engels had good reason to be happy. Just like the 1870 programme of the *Parti Ouvrier* that he drafted in his front room along with Marx and Paul Lafargue,[80] the Erfurt programme is divided into two parts: the so-called maximum and minimum sections. The *maximum section* introduces the programme by providing a brief summary of the Marxist principles of social democracy and its goal of abolishing not just capitalism but class society altogether: socialist

77 Broué 2006, p. 17. Broué is representative of the modern-day Trotskyist interpretation of Kautsky more generally. For a critique of this approach, cf. Conrad 2006, pp. 7–9.

78 Cf. Conrad 2006 (on which this section draws heavily) and Macnair 2008, pp. 56–8.

79 Engels 1891.

80 Marx and Guesde 1880.

transformation 'amounts to the emancipation not only of the proletariat, but of the entire human race, which is suffering from current conditions'.[81] Echoing Marx's insistence that such radical change must be based on the self-liberation of the working class,[82] it states that this social transformation:

> can only be the work of the working class, because all other classes, notwithstanding the conflicts of interest between them, stand on the ground of the private ownership of the means of production and have as their common goal the preservation of the foundations of contemporary society.[83]

Political struggle is central:

> The struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation is necessarily a political struggle. Without political rights, the working class cannot carry on its economic struggles and develop its economic organization. It cannot bring about the transfer of the means of production into the possession of the community without first having obtained political power.[84]

Indeed, the workers' movement's very existence depends on attaining such rights: as Kautsky puts it in his 1892 commentary on the Erfurt programme, the freedom to organise, press freedom and the right to vote are 'to the proletariat the prerequisites of life'.[85]

Moreover, the struggle for more generous rights and freedoms cannot be separated from the struggle for political power. Distancing itself from the so-called 'state socialists'[86] in the party, who were of the view that nationalisations and social reform under the aegis of Bismarckian Germany could amount to a form of socialism, the Erfurt programme stresses that the working class 'cannot bring about the transfer of the means of production into the possession of the com-

81 See the Appendix of this volume, p. 326.

82 Revealingly in terms of the struggle within the SPD between the supporters of Marx and the supporters of Lassalle, this emphasis on self-liberation comes from Marx's critical notes on the party's previous programme (Marx 1891 [1875]).

83 See the Appendix of this volume, p. 326.

84 Ibid., p. 327.

85 Kautsky 1971 [1892], p. 185.

86 Cf. Karl Kautsky 1892a for Kautsky's polemic against these ideas. Cf. Carsten 1990 for an overview of Vollmar's ideas on programme and strategy.

munity without first having obtained political power'.[87] Such a transformation cannot be the work of an enlightened minority coming to power through a *coup d'état*. Kautsky explains:

> The proletariat cannot emancipate itself if it is not constituted as an independent political organisation which captures state power. But this cannot be the work of a coup by a small minority of the working class. It presupposes the slow and laborious, in many cases peaceful work of raising the mass of the proletariat economically, morally and intellectually, and here the development of its economic organisations is indispensable.[88]

How is the working class to achieve political power? Far from viewing a successful revolution as some kind of natural or inevitable process in which there would be '"a law-like and inevitable development towards socialism" – indicated by the increasing number of social-democratic members and voters – and guaranteed by economic development',[89] the Erfurt programme lays out the democratic framework through which 'the possession of political power' is to be attained through the decisions and actions of an organised and politically conscious workers' movement with mass support. This brings us to the programme's *minimum section*. First come ten political demands which among other things include the call for: 'Universal, equal, and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all elections, for all citizens of the Reich over the age of twenty, without distinction of sex'; 'Compensation for elected representatives'; 'Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army'; 'Secularization of schools'; 'Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people'.[90]

These political demands are then followed by five main economic demands revolving around the eight-hour day, a ban on child labour and the right for workers to organise freely.

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87 See the Appendix of this volume, p. 327.

88 Cf. Part Two, p. 181 of this volume. Such comments on the need for a majority revolution can also be found in Kautsky's early career; cf. Kautsky 1881.

89 Groh 1973, p. 57. In his commentary on the Erfurt programme, Kautsky likewise underlines how socialism is not a predetermined outcome of capitalist development but is contingent on the victory of social democracy. He warns that if the socialist project fails, then the prospect of social decay along the lines of the disintegration of the Roman Empire may become a reality: 'As things stand today capitalist civilization cannot continue; we must either move forward into socialism or fall back into barbarism' (Kautsky 1971 [1892], p. 118).

90 See the Appendix of this volume, p. 328.

The programme's minimum demands should thus *not* be viewed, as Dick Geary and Pierre Broué view it, as minimal, partial or short-term demands for which the workers' movement should argue within existing society, *but as the minimum basis on which the SPD would form a government* and hence implement these measures – measures which are informed by the understanding that a working-class government is impossible without widespread democracy, the accountability of elected representatives and the dismantling of the judicial and military hierarchies.[91]

For Kautsky, then, the fundamental role of the minimum demands in social-democratic programmes is to stress what should be *demanded of* the existing state (with all progress and reform towards that end being welcomed), not whether such demands could actually be *conceded within* the framework of existing society before working-class government had been achieved: 'The programme should show what we [social democrats] *demand* of existing society or of the existing state, not what we *expect* from it'.[92] By way of example, he refers to the Erfurt programme's demand for universal suffrage: 'Nobody will be deceived by the idea that the election of state officials by the people in Germany is possible under existing conditions'.[93] (Universal, non-property qualified suffrage in Germany was indeed only achieved in 1919, following the eventual collapse of the *Kaiserreich*, though agitation for this achievement had a long history. The direct election of state officials was never achieved.)

This understanding of the minimum demands in the political sphere has two key strategic implications which would later place Kautsky at odds with the left and the right of the SPD as well as with the Socialist International more generally. First, that the SPD could not enter into any government which did not satisfy the conditions of the minimum programme. This conviction ensured that Kautsky was one of the most vehement critics of socialist ministerialism and the supporters of Alexandre Millerand in the Second International. (Alexandre Millerand was a French socialist whose decision to become a cabinet minister in the Waldeck-Rousseau government in 1899 led to his expulsion from the Second International and gave rise to the word 'Millerandism' as a derogatory term for reformist socialism. We shall take a closer look at Kautsky's views

91 These recurring features of Kautsky's conception of working-class rule will be discussed in more detail in the section below entitled 'Republicanism outlined'.

92 Kautsky 1895–6, p. 514.

93 Ibid. Lih argues that in the context of the *Kaiserreich* the moniker *minimum* programme 'seems a misleading epithet for a set of measures that would have entailed a vast political and social transformation of Imperial Germany: full representative democracy, full political liberties, religious tolerance, "socialised" medicine, progressive tax, labour protection laws' (Lih 2008, p. 77).

on Millerand below.) Second, that the main focus of the SPD should be as a party of decisive and hostile *opposition* to the existing state – an opposition which must be premised on the strengthening of the workers' movement *vis-à-vis* the state, until such a time that it wins majority support for its programme and outlook. Accordingly, Kautsky's career is characterised by a wariness of political actions which he felt could jeopardise the health and growth of the workers' movement, whether through violence, repression or a return to the Anti-Socialist Law. This informs his approach in several controversies within the SPD, not least over the importance and effectiveness of the general strike.[94]

For Kautsky, the SPD's intransigent opposition to the state flows from its programme and overall perspectives, not from this or that particular tactic. Indeed, as long as the party's programme were upheld, all sorts of tactical compromises and deals with other forces and social classes could be envisaged – even with those that defended the existing order: 'Compromises are dangerous with regards to our *programme*, not to our actions'.[95] One way in which the Erfurt programme expressed its opposition was, according to Kautsky, by constantly stressing its ultimate aims:

> What holds political parties together – particularly when they have a great historical role to fulfil, such as the social democratic party – are its final goals, not its immediate demands; not ideas about how the party should behave regarding all the individual issues that confront it.[96]

In other words, a mutual relationship exists between the maximum and the minimum programme: without the former, the SPD would be just another party of reform almost indistinguishable from liberal parties that shared some of the SPD's aims; without the latter, the party would be a utopian organisation with no understanding of how to create the very conditions in which its aims might be achieved. Further, the party's ultimate aims imbued it with cohesion and purpose, avoiding unnecessary splits and fall-outs over tactical questions:

> As I have argued, differences of opinion will always exist within a party, and on occasion they can reach a threatening pitch. But, the more lively

94 Cf. Kautsky 1910, Part Three, entitled 'Should we speak Russian or Belgian?'

95 Kautsky 1906, p. 586. In this article, for instance, Kautsky advocates a tactical non-aggression pact with the German liberals in Prussia, where the three-tier suffrage system effectively excluded the working class from the ballot box. A deal with the liberals could maximise social-democratic representation, which is why Kautsky favoured such a deal.

96 See Part One, p. 148 of this volume.

> the awareness of the great goals common to all party members, the more powerful the enthusiasm for them, the more difficult it will be for such differences to blow the party apart, with the demands and interests of the moment taking a back seat relative to the party's goals.[97]

Against those who have argued that Kautsky's foregrounding of opposition, organisation and propaganda based on the party's long-term aims is akin to a strategy of 'isolationism', or even to 'economism' and an aloofness from any active intervention in day-to-day political life,[98] it should be stressed that Kautsky is adamant that the development of social democracy to a point where it is ready to implement its programme:

> cannot happen by ignoring the bourgeois state. The proletariat cannot place itself outside the state. It remains within it, and any change in the latter in turn has an impact on the proletariat's own development. It cannot, therefore, stand on the side lines of the political struggles between the different bourgeois parties; it cannot regard the composition of legislation with indifference. It must actively engage in the former, supporting one side against the other. And it must attempt to wrest laws from the state which advance the proletariat's cause.[99]

Indeed, social-democratic participation in elections and parliament, even in institutions as weak as the 1890s Reichstag, is in Kautsky's view a crucial means of developing the strength of the workers' movement, of shaping legislation in a manner that protects workers' interests, of exposing corruption and – through elections – of gauging popular support for the party and its goals. Contrary to Kenneth R. Calkins's contention that the revolutionary identity of social democracy would be retained 'only if the daily struggle for immediate objectives was *tempered by* continued emphasis on the *Endziel* [ultimate goals]',[100] it should be stressed that Kautsky's emphasis on the party's ultimate aims flows from the wish to strengthen the daily struggle for immediate objectives.

This orientation towards parliament, elections and reforms has led Hal Draper, as well as several other Marxist scholars, to conclude that Kautsky could not envisage a non-parliamentarian form of representative democracy; in other words, that Kautsky made ' "parliamentarism" equivalent to "representative sys-

97 See Part One, p. 148 of this volume.
98 See Hoffrogge 2011, p. 202; Nettl 1965, pp. 83–4 in particular.
99 See Part Two, p. 181 of this volume.
100 Calkins 1982, p. 144 (emphasis added).

tem", which he defended as if it could be realized only in the existing bourgeois forms'.[101] Is Draper right? In order to answer this question, let us take a look at the text on which his claim is based, namely *Parliamentarism, Direct Legislation by the People and Social Democracy* (1893).

Parliament and Elections

Reprinted in 1911 under the shortened title *Parliamentarism and Democracy*, Kautsky's pamphlet explains why the German working class must pioneer the struggle for representative democracy, as outlined in the Erfurt programme's political demands. It was translated into Russian, Dutch, French, Polish and several other languages (this volume contains the first English-language translation) and exerted a considerable influence on European social democracy. The text constituted a response to an immediate political issue. Following the elections of 1890, where the SPD had won more votes than any other party (19.7%) and gained 35 seats in the Reichstag, the party's parliamentary fraction was strong and visible. This raised an obvious question, which Kautsky sought to answer: what exactly was the role of SPD parliamentarians, who were working within, but also intransigently opposed to, the existing state? Kautsky was further writing in response to a situation where social democracy internationally was becoming attracted to the ideas of direct democracy and popular, direct legislative initiatives, which were often conceived as superior – or impervious – to the perceived shortcomings of parliamentary democracy in most modern capitalist states.

The pamphlet sets out to tackle these ideas by defending the basic assertion that Kautsky made in his commentary on the Erfurt programme, namely that direct democracy 'cannot, at least in a modern state … render parliament superfluous, at best it can operate alongside parliament in order to correct it in individual cases'.[102]

Indeed, even if referenda and direct legislation *could* replace the representative institutions of modernity, then – Kautsky argues – this would represent a step backwards: it is much more important to focus on an extension of

101 Draper 1987, p. 54. This theoretical error, according to Draper, formed the basis of Kautsky's later political choices during the November Revolution of 1918 and his refusal to adopt a more radical standpoint towards the young Weimar Republic. This strikes me as a form of 'original sin' argumentation, along the lines of 'because Kautsky wrote this in 1893, he acted in this particular fashion some twenty-five years later'.

102 Cf. Part One, p. 41 of this volume.

representative democracy (as outlined in the Erfurt demands), which would pave the way for genuine democracy on which socialism had to be based. Direct legislation, by contrast, would render decision-making and administration chaotic and unaccountable in a modern state [*Großstaat*]. Moreover, according to Kautsky, the modern workers' movement itself is based on representative democracy, not least producer and consumer co-operatives, trade unions and social democracy itself.

Unsurprisingly for one of the Second International's leading historians,[103] Kautsky reinforces his arguments by surveying the history of direct democracy from the Iroquois to the 1890s, via ancient Greece and Rome, the city state of Venice, absolutist Europe and the English and French revolutions. This survey constitutes a direct attack on the many contemporary advocates of direct democracy who drew on various supposed golden ages in which direct democracy blossomed to the happiness of all. Kautsky rejects this retrospective utopianism by demonstrating that in the past direct democracy was possible only through the *exclusion* of certain groups of people. These people, such as women (ancient Germanic tribes) or women and slaves (ancient Athenian democracy in particular), were extremely productive economically, and thus integral to the functioning of society, but unable to take part in decision-making.

In his historical survey, Kautsky also traces the origins of the representative system and discusses what he terms 'modern democracy' – with a focus on England, 'the fatherland of parliamentarism' – in order to attack the 'fable' that the representative system is inexorably bound up with the rule of the bourgeoisie: 'The representative system is a political form that can assume, and has assumed, the most diverse content. The same is true of the despotic monarchy'.[104] He also claims that it is absurd to assert, as proponents of direct democracy often do, that parliamentary democracy was somehow ushered in by the ascendant *capitalist* class: representative political forms, he says, can actually be traced back to pre-French Revolution eighteenth-century absolutism in countries with restrictive monarchies, such as Poland, Sweden and Britain.

For Kautsky, then, the parliamentary system can take on manifold forms depending on the surrounding social context. The selection of parliamentary

103 Cf. Kautsky's statement at the beginning of *The Development of a Marxist* (Part Three, p. 279 of this volume): 'My thought always assumes historical forms. When it comes to ascertaining the interconnections of something, I am above all occupied with the question of how it came into being'. See Blackledge 2006, pp. 337–59 for an overview of Kautsky's historical output.

104 Cf. Part One, p. 123; p. 118 of this volume.

representatives and their social background, the extent of parliament's political influence on the executive power and the nature of political discussions within parliament – all are shaped by the social struggles and events in civil society which play out beyond it and find reflection within it.[105] Representative democracy in Britain, for example, assumes one form during the rise of the struggle between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, and another when the proletariat enters the political stage by organising itself into a modern class party and by demanding, as did the Chartist movement in the 1830s, political representation in the official structures of the state.

Further, when battles between various social classes flowed beyond the walls of parliament, this found expression in fierce parliamentary struggles. Kautsky cites the struggle between the aspirant English bourgeoisie and the established aristocracy as an example of this. Yet when these battles ebbed – when the class parties of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy came to an arrangement and agreed in principle on the direction to be taken by society – then parliament became more corrupt, and most people were alienated from it. It is incumbent upon social democracy to impose its own agenda on existing structures such as parliament and seek to *transform* them in the manner proposed by the Erfurt programme, not to dismiss these institutions as somehow inherently bourgeois. In other words, the political, judicial and administrative framework of any modern state will of necessity take the form of 'representative democracy' and attempting to abolish this form is futile. Echoing the passage in the programme of the *Parti Ouvrier* co-written by Marx,[106] Kautsky contends that representative democracy should not be abolished, but sublated [*aufgehoben*]. As he puts it: 'if the idiosyncrasies of the opponents of parliamentarism merely extend to the name, then it is easy to help them. The representative system will always re-emerge, however often they may destroy it'.[107]

Why does Kautsky place so much emphasis on the emerging working-class movement as the standard bearer of representative democracy? Here, too, his approach is historically rooted. Kautsky insists that ever since the English Civil War (1642–51) the proletariat is the revolutionary class *par excellence* in that it fights energetically for democracy and always drives on the struggle with more enthusiasm and verve than the hesitant and vacillating petty bourgeoisie and peasantry, and certainly far more than the bourgeoisie proper, which by

105 For a detailed study of how the relative strength of the middle classes affected the electoral success of social democracy across the world, cf. Marks, Mbaye and Min Kim 2009.

106 'Universal suffrage … will thus be transformed from the instrument of deception that it has been until now into an instrument of emancipation'; see Marx and Guesde 1880.

107 Cf. Part One, p. 108 of this volume.

1848 – he says – had completely abandoned the struggle for democracy, coming to terms with the aristocracy out of fear of allowing too much room for the burgeoning proletariat. After the failed revolution of 1848, the banner of democracy has to be picked up by a class which will only grow in number due to the laws of capitalist development.[108]

We are now in a position to identify four central aspects of Kautsky's understanding of democracy: first, that democracy forms the necessary 'light and air'[109] for the growth and maturity of the workers' movement; second, that it is a reliable means to test the support for socialist ideas (for example, in elections) as against that of other political parties and classes; third, that for Kautsky the proletariat is uniquely placed to fight to extend the kind of representative democracy through which its very own organisations blossom; and fourth, that the extension of democracy forms the basis on which a new social order can be built – the link between existing society and the society of the future, between the minimum and maximum sections of social-democratic programmes.

Having discussed the theoretical and historical basis of Kautsky's understanding of democracy in the modern *Großstaat* and his confidence that social democracy can win the battle for democracy as part of its efforts to reshape society, let us now elaborate on the close connection between the political demands of the Erfurt programme and its ultimate aims in the light of Kautsky's understanding of democracy as the 'indispensible foundations on which socialist society can be built'.[110] We shall do so by exploring his intellectual relationship to republicanism.

108 His emphasis on the proletariat does not mean that other classes cannot play a role. He notes: 'It can even come to pass that social democracy wins the majority of people, even in countries where waged workers do not form the majority. But today this is still far away. And, however close we may get to it, the proletariat will always form the backbone of the party; its characteristics will determine the party's character, its strength the party's power' (ibid., p. 112). This quote seems to have been overlooked by Erik van Ree, who argues that Kautsky was sceptical of winning over non-proletarian layers to revolutionary politics and thus at the beginning of the twentieth century had to expand his definition of the wage workers in order to prove that this class actually constituted the majority of society; see van Ree 2012, pp. 580–7 in particular.

109 Kautsky 1971 [1892], p. 185.

110 Kautsky 1918, pp. 19–20.

Republicanism Outlined

On 21 May 1871, troops of the French regime based in Versailles entered Paris and proceeded to crush the Paris Commune, the short-lived popular regime which Marx and Engels viewed as a heroic incarnation of the democratic republic, 'the dictatorship of the proletariat'.[111] In European socialist circles, the name of Marquis de Gallifet – the military general who led the assault – became synonymous with butchery, barbarity and reaction. Twenty-seven years later, the same general Gallifet was appointed Minister of War in Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau's government. Sparking much controversy within the workers' movement internationally, a socialist by the name of Alexandre Millerand also decided to join this administration. His justification for accepting the post of Minister of Commerce – a decision he made without consulting his party – was that it would provide broader support for the French Republic and thereby strengthen it against monarchist-restorationist forces, which were organising for its overthrow.[112] It was a line of reasoning that many in the socialist movement openly rejected, however.

In accordance with his view that social democracy should eschew government power until it had won majority support for the socialist programme, Kautsky led the polemical charge against Millerand and Millerand's supporters in the Second International. A motion he drafted against socialist participation in government was passed at the Paris Congress of 1900,[113] but the issue continued to divide opinion in the International between orthodox Marxists, who rejected government participation in capitalist administrations, and revisionist socialists, who generally favoured it.

The controversy over the correct socialist attitude towards the French Third Republic came to a head in a heated dispute between two of the most promin-

111 'Of late, the German philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' (Engels 1891a. Translation corrected).

112 The backdrop to this was the Dreyfus affair, which deeply divided French society and raised key questions about justice, prejudice and the role of the military in the Third Republic. Kautsky contends that the only genuine threat to the republic is 'its own grievances' … its own 'means of rule'; see Part Two, p. 257 of this volume.

113 Kevin Callahan notes that this resolution was seen as insufficiently forthright in its condemnation of socialist ministerialism. The editorial board of *Iskra*, the Russian social-democratic newspaper, found it so vague that they called it not 'the Kautsky resolution' (as it was widely known) but the 'caoutchouc resolution' for its rubbery, malleable content (Callahan 2010, p. 9).

ent socialist parliamentarians – August Bebel and Jean Jaurès – at the International's 1904 Amsterdam Congress.[114] For the proponents of revisionist socialism in the movement, Kautsky and Bebel's hostility to Millerand's government post and to the Third Republic created the impression that the two central figures of the SPD either opposed republican forms of government or were simply avoiding concrete political questions – passively awaiting the arrival of socialism instead. Historians have often taken the same view.[115] But is Kautsky really indifferent to defending the republic from monarchist restoration? How exactly does he view the relationship between republicanism and socialism?

In the wake of the Amsterdam Congress and in the face of accusations of being unconcerned with state political forms, Kautsky felt compelled to clarify his attitude towards the French Third Republic and defend what he understood as the Marxist republican tradition. He first engaged in a polemic with Kurt Eisner, editor of the socialist daily *Vorwärts* and one of the proponents of revisionist socialism, over this issue.[116] But when it became clear to Kautsky that this discussion was creating more heat than light, he decided to embark on a more detailed and systematic discussion of republicanism. The resulting seven-part series of articles for *Die Neue Zeit*, entitled *The Republic and Social Democracy in France* and published in 1905, is perhaps the most concise summary of republicanism by a major Marxist thinker: there is no such treatise solely devoted to the topic written by Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky.

Nonetheless, until recently this text has been completely overlooked, prompting Lars T. Lih to describe it as 'the book that didn't bark'.[117] There has been no attempt to integrate Kautsky's arguments in this series into his overall understanding of democracy. Lars T. Lih gave a short paper on the series at the 2006 *Historical Materialism* conference in London, in which he used a number of Kautsky's arguments on the state to question some of Lenin's assertions in his polemic against Kautsky in *State and Revolution* (1917). Based on this talk, Lih wrote an introduction to my translation, published in 2011, of the first part of Kautsky's series. Finally, the series as a whole is made available in Part Two of this publication.

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114 For an overview of the Congress, cf. Joll 1955, pp. 100–5; de Leon 1904, pp. 35–55 in particular; Callahan 2010, pp. 19–31.

115 In his popular summary of the tensions within French socialism, for example, the historian James Joll writes that, unlike the orthodox Marxists, Jaurès did not 'remain indifferent … to the preservation of the republic, for him a necessary and desirable stage on the road to the socialist state'; Joll 1955, pp. 84–5.

116 Kautsky 1904a.

117 Lih 2011a.

It is not merely the uniqueness of the series of articles, or the lack of scholarly engagement with it, that makes it deserving of a closer look. Kautsky's arguments within *The Republic* offer fresh insights into his outlook on state and society and, moreover, call into question the reception of his views on these topics by his contemporaries and subsequent scholarship. Since Lenin, it has often been maintained that Kautsky failed to integrate Marx and Engels's conclusions on French republican history into his overall political thought – not least Marx's contention, in the aftermath of the Paris Commune, that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes'.[118] Lenin charges that Kautsky ignores Marx and Engels's insistence on the necessity of the '"complete destruction" of the centralised state apparatus – the standing army, the police, and the bureaucracy'.[119] Almost all scholars have taken this argument as their point of departure. For example, Mike Macnair, Massimo Salvadori and Hal Draper argue – from different perspectives – that Kautsky did not recognise the necessity of crushing the bourgeois state machinery. Stephen Eric Bronner even claims that nowhere in Kautsky's career 'was there even an explicit demand for the republic'.[120]

This section will use *The Republic* to challenge these widespread views. First, I shall briefly survey the influence of Marx and Engels on Kautsky's republicanism. Second, I shall provide an overview of *The Republic* and its key ideas. Finally, I shall foreground the connections between Kautsky's republicanism and his understanding of democracy as the fundamental basis of socialist transformation.

Engels and Erfurt's Missing Piece

The secondary literature which makes the case for Kautsky's alleged misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge, of the ideas of Marx and Engels appears to have a strong foundation in the form of a text written by Engels himself. While, as has been outlined above, Engels had much praise for the Erfurt programme of German social democracy, he nonetheless had one major criticism of the document: that it did not explicitly call for the creation of a *democratic republic* in Germany, which for him represented 'the specific form for the dic-

118 Marx 1871, Chapter 5.

119 Lenin 1917, Chapter 6.

120 Cf., for example, Bronner 1982, p. 584; Draper 1987, pp. 55–60; Macnair 2008, p. 20; p. 58; p. 76; Salvadori 1979, pp. 13–14.

tatorship of the proletariat',[121] or – as Marx put it – 'the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economical emancipation of labor'.[122] Engels states: 'The political demands of the draft have one great fault. It *lacks* precisely what should have been said. If all the 10 demands were granted we should indeed have more diverse means of achieving our main political aim, but the aim itself would in no wise have been achieved'[123] – to wit, the republic.

While aware that open republican agitation could lead to the SPD's being driven underground once again (he suggests the alternative formulation '*concentration of all political power in the hands of the people's representatives*' – instead of 'democratic republic' – to circumvent this danger), Engels insists that the working class could only come to power in the democratic-republican order outlined in the Erfurt programme's political demands. There can be no socialism within the constitutional framework of the *Kaiserreich*. Nor, for that matter, is socialism possible within the structures of the French Third Republic: 'So, then, a unified republic. But not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1799 without the Emperor.'[124]

Engels's criticism is typically trenchant. But to what extent is it aimed at Kautsky? Concluding his remarks, Engels writes:

> But the fact that in Germany it is not permitted to advance even a republican party programme openly, proves how totally mistaken is the belief that a republic, and not only a republic, but also communist society, can be established in a cosy, peaceful way.[125]

As we have seen in our discussion of the struggle for universal suffrage within the *Kaiserreich*, Kautsky warned of the 'deception' of believing in the possibility of introducing universal suffrage and the election of state officials within the confines of the existing state structures in Germany. Engels may use the term 'illusion' instead of 'deception', but both thinkers appear to be criticising the state socialists in the party. Moreover, there is textual evidence that Kautsky shared Engels's emphasis on the importance of republican agitation. Let us now turn to the text in which both Kautsky's republicanism and his proximity to the political thought of Marx and Engels become most apparent.

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121 Engels 1891.
122 Marx 1871, Chapter 5.
123 Engels 1891.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid.

The Republic and Social Democracy in France (1905)

The Republic makes a number of points. First, Kautsky describes the various socialist positions on republicanism expressed at the Amsterdam Congress of 1904 and outlines the various attitudes towards republicanism in the socialist movement. He then presents an overview of French revolutionary history from 1789 to 1848. This is followed by an analysis of the French Second Republic and the various socialist groups operating within it. After an investigation of the structures of the Paris Commune of 1871, the text concludes with Kautsky's subjecting the judicial, constitutional, military, electoral and economic foundations of the Third Republic to a thoroughgoing critique, comparing and contrasting them to those of the Paris Commune.

The republican content in this series of articles is clearly influenced by Engels's comments on the Erfurt programme. Just as Engels argues in that text that the French Third Republic amounts to an 'empire without the emperor' and contrasts it to a genuinely democratic republic,[126] Kautsky identifies two types of republicanism: a bourgeois variety embodied in the French Third Republic, and the kind of radical, proletarian republic along the lines of the Paris Commune. Depending on their particular content, republics can thus form the basis of what Kautsky terms 'the class rule' of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat:

> Thus, the same republic which forms the basis for the emancipation of the proletariat can at the same time become the basis for the class domination of the bourgeoisie. This is a contradiction, but one which is no stranger than the contradictory role played by the machine in capitalist society: the machine is both the indispensable precondition for the liberation of the proletariat and at the same time the means of its degradation and enslavement.[127]

Following on from this, Kautsky underlines how republican agitation should not cease with the formal removal or abdication of a monarch. Fully in the spirit of Engels's republican critique of the Erfurt programme, Kautsky argues that Marxist republican agitation must continue until the conditions have been created for the working class to take power.[128] Such conditions are a far throw

126 Ibid.

127 Part Two, p. 159 of this volume.

128 Thereby providing a further refutation of his grandson John Kautsky's claim that his grandfather failed 'to think systematically about the nature of the future socialist society and of

from those in the *Troisième République* in France and, as we shall see, amount to a state form in which the political demands of the Erfurt programme have been realised.

Kautsky argues that while the Third Republic should be defended from an overthrow from the right, at the same time the monarchical 'means of rule' of the Third Republic should be exposed and replaced by more widespread democracy and control from below. *The Republic* is thus an extended polemic against the French socialists who believe that it is desirable for socialists to assume governmental responsibility for this republic on the basis that 'the republic as such' signifies 'a mitigation of the class rule of the bourgeoisie'. Kautsky describes such a position as a 'republican superstition', the notion – prevalent in the French and American republics – that because monarchical rule no longer exists, the people as a whole possess political power and classes and class rule have become a thing of the past. While the French liberals in particular would be keen to promote such a message, Kautsky argues that the entertainment of such illusions by self-described socialists is unforgivable. After all: 'The main task of our American [and French] comrades today is to destroy this republican superstition'.[129]

Further, argues Kautsky, just as there are bourgeois republics and proletarian republics, there are also bourgeois-republican and proletarian-republican historical traditions in France. Given the importance Kautsky places on history, he is particularly irked by the attempts of liberal historians (and their socialist outriders) to portray the French Third Republic as the contemporary incarnation of a republican ideal that had come into existence in 1793; he argues that it is ludicrous to act as if 'today's Third Republic is a realisation of the republican ideal that the proletarian masses have had in their heads since 1793'.[130] This is where his historical overview comes in. He analyses the radical democratic-republican content – 'the ideal of the democratic republic' – ushered in by the revolutionary regimes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in France and analyses how counterrevolution undermined these radical democratic forms in order to disempower the people and restore authoritarian rule. Just as monarchical 'means of rule' had undermined and replaced, for example, the radical republic of 1848, the Paris Commune of 1871 had been overthrown and supplanted by essentially monarchical forms of rule in state and society. The

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the governmental measures that would be required to convert capitalism into socialism' (Kautsky 1994, p. 16).

129 Part Two, p. 163 of this volume.

130 Part Two, p. 257 of this volume.

difference this time around, however, was that this transformation occurred in the name of the *republic*. Understanding this basic fact, argues Kautsky, should underline how erroneous it is to argue that the Third French Republic was a genuinely republican and revolutionary state form, that 'because it shares the same name then its essence is the same too.'[131]

As we have seen above, it is often claimed that Kautsky's political thought was unaffected by the 'revolutionary spirit' of the Paris Commune of 1871. In what follows, we shall therefore focus on the sections of *The Republic* in which Kautsky describes the defining features of the Commune and compares and contrasts them to the French Third Republic which was ushered in following the Commune's defeat. What did Kautsky understand as the 'ideal of the democratic republic', which 'the Parisian proletariat of 1871 would seek to form into an instrument of its emancipation'?[132] And how similar or dissimilar are Kautsky's arguments to the views of Marx and Engels on the Paris Commune? These are the questions to which we must now turn.

After describing the course of events which led to the formation of the Paris Commune, Kautsky extensively quotes from Marx's *The Civil War in France* (1871) in order to highlight what he – following Marx – views as the political features of the Commune that distinguish it as a revolutionary government: the replacement of the standing army by a people's militia; universal suffrage; public servants working for an average worker's wage; the disestablishment of the Church and a secular state; the election of judges on short terms of service and self-government in the localities.[133] In other words, there is clear reference to Marx's criteria for working-class government and the conclusion Marx drew from the experience of 1871 – that the existing state machinery must be completely overhauled, not given a socialist gloss. Kautsky is quite explicit on this matter and, paraphrasing Marx, pinpoints the central pillars of the state machinery which must be overhauled by working-class government:

> The conquest of state power by the proletariat therefore does not simply mean the conquest of the government ministries, which then, without further ado, administers the previous means of rule – an established state church, the bureaucracy and the officer corps – in a socialist manner. Rather, it means the dissolution of these institutions. As long as the proletariat is not strong enough to abolish these institutions of power, then taking over individual government departments and entire governments

131 Ibid.

132 Part Two, p. 199 of this volume.

133 Marx 1871 (cited by Kautsky in Part Two, pp. 197–99 of this volume).

> will be to no avail. A socialist ministry can at best exist temporarily. It will be worn down in the futile struggle against these institutions of power, without being able to create anything permanent.[134]

The defeat and suppression of the Commune, argues Kautsky, entailed the overthrow of this (genuinely) republican form of rule, so that the republic became 'a tool of bourgeois class rule'.[135] It forced the bourgeoisie to reign over the proletariat itself – an unpleasant task, which the bourgeoisie had previously left to the monarchy.

Thus there could be no talk of an unbroken republican thread between 1789 and the establishment of the Third Republic. There was a radical break, embodied in the 'bloody week' (*la semaine sanglante*) of May 1871, in which thousands of Communards were killed, arrested or forced into exile.

Kautsky argues that here French history effectively repeated itself, with a kind of semi-monarchy rising from the ruins of a defeated revolutionary republic much like in 1814 and 1848. For although this time around the restoration was unsuccessful (something Kautsky ascribes to the petty squabbles between the pretenders to the French throne), and although there was no *de jure* restoration of the monarchy, the monarchical institutions and state forms were *de facto* retained in the new Third Republic. Its constitution had 'taken over all the institutions of the monarchy which the three great French revolutions attempted to destroy.'[136]

Not only does Kautsky's *The Republic* recapitulate Engels's ideas on the democratic republic as 'a means of the emancipation of the proletariat',[137] Kautsky also explicitly uses the criteria for socialist government outlined in Marx's *The Civil War in France* as a foil with which to highlight the gulf between the Paris Commune and the Third Republic. What follows is a devastating critique of the Third Republic which, while more developed and thorough than anything Marx and Engels wrote on the subject, is fully in line with their arguments on the state form.

Marx and Engels placed great importance on the existence of universal male suffrage in the Commune (female suffrage was decreed but never achieved in the Commune's short life-span). Yet in the Third Republic, argues Kautsky, the distribution of elected delegates from the various French *départements* is skewed in favour of the agrarian and reactionary provinces at the expense of

134 Part Two, p. 177 of this volume.
135 Part Two, p. 184 of this volume.
136 Part Two, p. 210 of this volume.
137 Part Two, p. 161 of this volume.

the industrial and revolutionary ones – a system which ensures that the masses of Paris 'only have one-sixth of the franchise of those living in the Hautes Alpes.'[138] Unlike in the Commune, therefore, suffrage is far from universal and moreover is designed to disenfranchise the revolutionary proletariat as much as possible. Another anti-democratic trait of the Third Republic is the fact that the President has at his disposal a wide variety of military, executive and fiscal powers which go far beyond even 'those accepted by the reactionary chamber of 1843.'[139] Moreover, during the Third Republic the President's term of office was extended from four to seven years, further eroding collective democratic control from below.

What of the Commune's secularism highlighted by Marx? Kautsky makes the case that the Third Republic has retained the Concordat concluded between Bonaparte and Pope Pius VII in 1801: the short-lived separation of Church and state in the Commune is abolished and the influence of the clergy thereby increased.[140] Things are not much better in the judiciary or the state bureaucracy either: 'There is no trace of professional judges being elected by the people. The Third Republic has made the Empire's entire judicial equipment its own, including the position of state prosecutor, which dominates judicial proceedings'.[141] Moreover, the President of the Third Republic is able to appoint all important civil servants: unlike in the Commune, there is no direct control from below.

Concluding, Kautsky then turns his attention to what he deems the most important of the features of class rule identified by Marx, the army.[142] While the Third Republic passed legislation on the need for every able Frenchman to carry out compulsory military service, the organisation of the armed forces is far removed from the popular militia of the Commune. He who performs military service:

> is not an armed citizen trained in the use of weapons. Just like the old professional soldier, he lives in barracks, cut off from the people. Outside of his working life in the military, he is subject to a particular discipline and jurisdiction enforced by a privileged caste of officers who are above

138 Part Two, p. 203 of this volume.
139 Part Two, p. 201 of this volume.
140 Part Two, p. 171 of this volume.
141 Part Two, p. 208 of this volume.
142 The fate of the November Revolution also revolved around developments within the armed forces. See Haffner 2008 [1979], pp. 95–108 for an account of the impact of revolutionary developments within the army and navy.

port and the methods of production, mass industries began to come to the fore alongside luxury industries. While the latter required a rich, lavish class in order to flourish, and flourished all the more the more that the court and the aristocracy sucked away at the people, mass industries could only thrive more if the mass of the population was able to consume and thus be exploited less by the parasitic classes. The more that industry became mass, the more unbearable the aristocratic system of robbery was to the bourgeoisie. To the extent that industry became mass industry, however, the demand for food (for waged workers in industry) and raw materials in the country grew. Domestic production proved increasingly unable to meet the growing demand. Importing cheap food and raw materials became an increasingly important issue for the industrial classes. The interests of the landowners, by contrast, went in the opposite direction. These circumstances – in several countries all of them combined, in other countries at least a few of them together – brought about the growing hostility of the bourgeoisie towards the aristocratic regime in whatever form it might assert itself, whether in a parliamentary state or in the absolute monarchy. This first happened in England and France, but later in the other European countries too. In addition to the bourgeoisie, the lower classes – peasants and petty bourgeois – also began to stir. They were now joined by an industrial proletariat that still did not show any signs of independent life, but went hand-in-hand with the petty bourgeoisie. The state weighed down upon these classes with its entire burden; from these classes it drew its primary means of covering the expenses demanded by the bureaucracy, militarism, state debts and of feeding the court with its countless parasites. Peasants and petty bourgeois – as well as proletarians, to the extent that it was possible to talk of this class in the earlier centuries – had from the outset been hostile to the absolute state power that was in formation, as well as to the aristocracy's exploitation of the state. But wherever they had attempted to engage in resistance, they were usually inferior because of their particularism, because of the lack of a connection between the individual communities and districts, so that the centralised state power found it easy to deal with them. With time, however, the unity of the state and capitalism – trade, state taxes, military service and so on – had an impact on the lower classes. The local restrictiveness and the parochialism gradually waned. In some areas it did so earlier, in others later, especially amongst the petty bourgeois and proletarians, who in the smaller towns came into ever closer contact with their counterparts in the cities. The latter's example was decisive for the working classes across the whole country. And now capitalist industry was concentrating masses of proletarians in the cities alongside an attachment of small traders and craftsmen who did not live off courtly splendour. This splendour merely made them more sharply

conscious of their misery and concentrated all of the starving crowd's hatred and bitterness towards the court and its creatures. Under the leadership of the working classes of the cities, the petty bourgeois and proletarians across the whole country – and, on occasion, even the peasants – began to recognise that they also had common interests in relation to the state in addition to their local interests. Their power and prestige grew to the extent that their local narrowness disappeared and national aspirations amongst them began to assert themselves. Alongside the capitalists and working classes, however, there emerged a third opponent to the aristocratic regime: the bourgeois intelligentsia, which consisted of lawyers, professors, doctors, writers, artists and so on.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these classes were either directly or indirectly dependent upon the aristocracy. In the Middle Ages, the church was a refuge of the arts and sciences. Ever since it ceased being that, since the Reformation, each and every thinker, poet or visual artist who was not of independent means was only able to devote himself to his art or his science with the help of a high lord who deigned to take him in as one of his minions. But to the extent that the bourgeoisie grew in strength, so did its wealth and thus, at least for a section of its members, its leisure; to the extent that communications increased, the needs and consequences of which made it necessary for specific classes of educated people to emerge and thus, so to speak, created a market for these people – lawyers, doctors, engineers, teachers and so on; finally, to the extent that the lower classes, particularly in the cities, began to participate in the political and intellectual life of the nation, to buy books and to read newspapers and so on, to this extent the intelligentsia became more independent of the court and the aristocracy; now, in science and art, tendencies that were directed against these powers could also come into their own, and soon these tendencies in science and art came to prevail, because the logic of facts spoke against the aristocratic regime and because the intelligentsia had mainly sprung from the bourgeoisie and was closest to it in terms of social position and interests.

But generally, in the range of its views, the intelligentsia stood above the other sections of the bourgeoisie, and their momentary interests did not particularly overlap. Thus the bourgeois intelligentsia was able to become a pioneer of the bourgeoisie, a researcher and representative of its permanent class interests. But what these classes demanded was at that time in the interests of social development as a whole, including in the interests of the lower classes, who had to fight a common enemy with the classes above them: the aristocratic regime, the state's exploitation of the people for the benefit of the aristocracy. So great was the pressure of this regiment, so excessive was its exploitation,

that in the face of it the contradictions amongst the individual classes in the mass of the population receded: the contradictions between town and country, wage worker and capitalist, craft and big industry, industry and trade and so on. In addition to the proletariat, the various layers of the bourgeois, petty bourgeois and peasant classes united to overthrow the absolute state power and to dethrone the nobility. The class which contributed most to this, and which turned out to be its strongest unifying thread, was the bourgeois intelligentsia. It succumbed least to the influence of those factors that kept the various classes apart, it perceived and recognised the most unifying factors better than others did. The democratic movement, the fruit of this alliance which was formed in the last decades of the eighteenth century, received its character, its leaders and its pioneers from the bourgeois intelligentsia. The tasks of the democracy lay in two directions. If possible it had to weaken the omnipotence which the central state power – whether it was a monarchy or a parliament – possessed *vis-à-vis* the people. But this was possible only to a certain extent, for capitalist society requires a strong central state power in order to thrive. Alongside the first task, then, the democracy thus had to set itself the second task: transforming the central power from a tool of the aristocracy into a tool of the people. Solving the first task presupposed free criticism of the state power and its organs: the publication of parliamentary business and unrestricted freedom of speech and the press. Further, it required the transfer of several functions and means of coercion from the state power and its officials to the municipalities and the provinces, which had to be granted self-administration. This self-administration did not signify the restoration of medieval particularism. The municipality did not thereby once again become the self-standing whole that it once was. It remained a member of the great whole, of the nation, and had to function within and for the framework of the nation. The rights and duties of the individual municipalities towards the state were no longer determined by specific treaties. They were a product of the central power's legislation, which applied to all in the same fashion; the municipalities were defined by the interests of the state as a whole, not by the interests of the individual municipalities. Alongside this demand, the democracy had to fight for the dissolution of the state power's most important means of coercion, the standing army, and for its replacement with a militia.

Finally, it had to demand the end of the forced atomisation of the nation, insofar as this was not a product of economic development but was enforced by the excessive growth of the police state. The violent isolation of the individual state citizens from each other was to come to an end and they were to receive the right to join together in associations in order to safeguard their common

interests, and thereby be able to act more powerfully in state and society. Thus the demand for freedom of assembly, association and the freedom to form a coalition.

The second task of the democracy consisted of making the state power subservient to the people. In this respect, the example of England became standard. In that country we saw that the principality was completely powerless before the parliament. It appeared that a representative assembly, equipped with the competences of the English parliament towards the crown, was the most important way – the only possible one, even – to control the enormous power at the disposal of the government of a modern, centralised state and to make this power subservient to the masses, who were granted the power to elect representatives to the representative assembly.

The struggle for parliamentary institutions was therefore indissolubly linked with the awakening of political life in Europe. It is well known that this struggle led to the introduction of such institutions everywhere, although naturally the governments did everything possible to take with the one hand what they had given with the other, and to make the parliaments as toothless as possible. But in Europe, not even Russia was able to desist from the parliamentary form of government completely – even in Turkey there was a kind of *faux* parliament during the most recent Russo-Turkish war.

But if England showed how dangerous parliamentarism can be to the absolute monarchy, it also showed that a parliament is by no means necessarily a representation of the people as a whole. The struggle for suffrage became just as important as the struggle for parliamentary institutions. Whether parliament is an instrument for the class rule of the aristocracy, whether it serves the bourgeoisie, or whether it becomes a battlefield for the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat depends on the form that the suffrage assumes. The struggle for the right to vote is far more bitter and protracted than the struggle for the admission of a 'constitutional government'. In most European countries, the struggle for suffrage continues to this day. Universal, direct and equal suffrage is the most important – but not the only – means of making parliament subservient to the mass of the population and of making it into a faithful expression of the dominant aspirations within it. To this end, in addition there is a series of less incisive, but by no means unimportant devices, such as the shortening of parliamentary terms, secret ballots, moving election days to Sundays, proportional representation and so on. Parties fight for measures of this kind everywhere.

The referendum and the initiative also belong to the devices just mentioned. In democratic Switzerland they have acquired a certain significance. The referendum represents the right of the people to vote, under certain conditions, on

bills drawn up by the representative body of the people; the initiative represents the right of the people to vote on proposals for laws or propositions for such laws. These propositions originate in the people themselves. According to Article 89 of the 1874 Swiss Federal Constitution, if 30,000 Swiss citizens who are eligible to vote, or 8 cantons demand it, then laws of the Confederation and universally binding resolutions must be presented to the people to be accepted or rejected. Article 123 of this constitution makes it obligatory to conduct a referendum on revisions to the constitution. The people's right to conduct an initiative regarding day-to-day laws is absent from the constitution. Yet the Federal Assembly must bow to the will of the people if 5,000 Swiss citizens who are eligible to vote demand that the constitution be partially or completely revised (articles 120 and 121 of the constitution). In the constitutions of several cantons, the rights of the population *vis-à-vis* the representative bodies go even further. In several cantons, the constitutional referendum is obligatory, not merely facultative, as it is in the Federal Constitution. New laws and resolutions (especially those pertaining to financial matters) must be presented for voting on by the people in Zurich, Bern, Schwyz, Solothurn, Graubünden, Aargau, Thurgau, Valais and Basel-Country.

Most other cantons allow for both the facultative referendum and the initiative. Freiburg is the only Swiss canton where there is no trace of either the referendum or the initiative. Geneva, Waadt and Neuchâtel have only introduced the facultative referendum.

Nowhere, however, do the referendum and the initiative tend towards rendering the representative assembly superfluous. Rather, they presuppose this assembly. The making of laws is almost everywhere reserved for these assemblies. The referendum merely gives the people the right to vote on the laws that originate from the canton council or the federal assembly.

But the initiative, mainly in formal terms, or as a rule in actual terms, merely gives the population the right to place demands on, or make proposals to, the representatives in the assembly to pass certain laws; the composition of the legal text remains the preserve of this assembly. The referendum and the initiative are not intended to abolish the legislative central power, parliament, but to strengthen the influence of the population on parliament and to make it more dependent on the people. Both institutions are the most extreme consequences of modern democracy.

CHAPTER 7

Rittinghausen's Proposal

1848 marked the zenith of the bourgeois democracy. From then on, things went rapidly downhill for it. It had drawn its strength from its blindness, from the fact that it was unable to see the class differences among the mass of the population. It became a phalanx that was impossible to resist simply because it welded the various classes, from the bourgeoisie through to the proletariat, into a united mass, simply because it exaggerated the significance of their common political aims and overlooked what could separate these classes. Its day of victory had to be its day of ruin. With the fall of monarchical absolutism (in France, the parliamentary absolutism of high finance) and the courtly aristocracy, the thread that had united workers and industrial capitalists, town and country, was torn. From this point on, each class sought – and had to seek – to use the newly acquired freedoms for their particular interests; democratic freedom led not to social peace, but to social war; the classes that had until recently been allies now became the most bitter enemies – this often came as a surprise, because the democracy had carefully avoided revealing the contradictions that existed in its womb. After 1848, when these contradictions were unleashed, the democracy perished. The vast majority of the democrats did not realise this back then. The view that the people make up a uniform mass with uniform interests had to a certain extent formed the backbone of that movement. For more than two generations, this idea had been recognised by the greatest and most noble intellectuals of all nations, for it had inspired all thinking and humane elements in the mass of the European population. This idea, with all the mistakes and illusions attached to it, did not emerge from the errors of a handful of superficial observers. The historical situation of a century had imposed it on the nations: such an idea is not thrown overboard without further ado.

The democrats sought the causes of their failure not in the composition of the people, not in the different interests and beliefs of the individual classes (at least not the lower classes) but in superficialities, in the mistakes of individual people or institutions. Many believed that the most important cause of the failure of the democratic revolution was to be found in the parliaments of the time, especially in the composition and lack of energy of the German and French National Assemblies. Others turned against parliamentarism altogether. One of these was the German democrat, Rittinghausen.

The representative system, he declared, was to blame for all social evils. It is absurd, he wrote:

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> to have white represented by black, universal interests by private interests. They are diametrically opposed to each other. If both were identical, then there would be no need for the state, because peace and justice would prevail everywhere by themselves; but because they are not identical, logic forbids us from conceding the right to pass laws, or to uphold the general good, to a grouping of a few hundred private interests, which mainly involve the interests of the bourgeoisie.[1]

For Rittinghausen, the representative system must be completely abolished and direct legislation by the people must take its place. Once this happens, then the will of the people can freely express itself, and then 'true right' and 'universal interests' will come to power of their own accord:

> The social-democratic republic consists of the removal of the representative system and the introduction of direct legislation by the people. I may claim the honour of first discovering this truth and of having constantly proclaimed it.[2]

The idea of legislation by the people itself was nothing new. All educated people were familiar with it from the history of Athens and Rome, as well as from the history of the ancient Germans. It also remained alive in the middle of Europe. In a few remote Alpine valleys in Switzerland, remnants of the original popular assemblies, which originally met periodically and formed the highest authority in the polity, have been preserved. In the spring, before the shepherds depart to the Alps, the male adult citizens of the canton gather together in an assembly, where in the open air they discuss public affairs, elect officials, pass laws and so on. But just as in ancient times, even now it is necessary that public affairs are dealt with in one single assembly. A prerequisite of direct legislation is thus the smallness of the canton. The canton must be small enough for every citizen to get to the meeting place without effort, cost and the damaging effects of wasting time; its population must not be so numerous that all of the citizens

1 Rittinghausen 1869, p. 1. Also cf. Rittinghausen 1892, p. 32. The first edition appeared in 1852. The editor of the 2nd edition, who is unknown to us, was so tasteless as – probably following the example of the Gospel, which outlines Jesus's genealogy from Abraham onwards – to trace Rittinghausen's high-feudal family tree back to the Norman Gerlo, who at the beginning of the tenth century gave King Charles the Simple the county of Blois. Rittinghausen's grandmother was a Countess of Blois. Strangely enough, our accurate biographer omits to mention that Rittinghausen's noble ancestor, Gerlo, was a wild pirate who was given the county so that he would become settled and stop plundering France.

2 Rittinghausen 1877, p. 18.

who are eligible to vote cannot meet and negotiate in one single assembly.[3] Until Rittinghausen, nobody – not even as sharp a critic of the representative system as Jean-Jacques Rousseau[4] – considered it possible to have the public affairs of large communities dealt with by direct legislation by the people. Rittinghausen was the first to declare that this was possible and also provided the method through which his idea could be implemented. This idea had just as little to do with the original legislation by the people, as represented by a few Swiss cantons, as it does with the referendum and the initiative, through which the Swiss people monitor the representative body and encourage it to pass certain laws.

'Direct legislation among these people (the Romans, Greeks and Germans)', says Rittinghausen, 'was never the organisation that I proposed and the one that will be accepted infallibly, because it is the only sensible one'.

> I may take credit for the fact that this organisation is unique to me, that I have invented the previously unknown art of having laws emerge freely and organically from free discussions among the people as a whole, that I have ushered in a new epoch in the science of law.[5]

Of what does our self-assured inventor's invention consist? Rittinghausen deems it quite unnecessary that the legislative assembly should be one single assembly. He proposes that one and the same law should be made simultaneously by several thousand legislative assemblies which convene alongside each other and without any connection to each other. Let us take a closer look at his proposal:

> Once a certain number of citizens, to be determined by law, demands that this or that subject be placed on the agenda of the people – as soon as that number of citizens demands the passing of a new law on one matter or another, or demands the abolition of an old law, the ministry is obliged, within a designated time, to invite the people to assemble on a certain day in order to pass resolutions and to proceed with making legislation.

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3 (Kautsky's footnote): Even in 1860, there were 14,700 inhabitants in Uri, in Unterwalden 13,000, Ob Dem Wald 11,000, Glarus 33,000, Appenzell-Ausserrhoden 48,000, Innerhoden 12,000. Not one of the cantons had more than 50,000 inhabitants. Public affairs in all of these cantons are of such a primitive and minor nature, that if the assemblies meet for one or two days per year then they can take care of them.

4 The political thought of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) was influenced by the experience of city-state direct democracy.

5 Rittinghausen 1892, p. 198.

In order to enact its legislative rights, the people must be divided up into sections, each of which is best made up of one thousand state citizens. Each section gathers in a suitable public place and it appoints its chairman, who guides the debate. Each citizen may request to speak in order to contribute his ideas to the general education of the section.

'When the debate is closed, each citizen casts his vote'. After the vote, the chairman notifies the municipality's mayor about the number of votes for and against each question. The municipality mayor gathers the number of votes passed by the sections in his municipality, the district mayor then gathers together the number of votes passed by the communities in his district and 'sends them to the highest state authority, the ministry, which must calculate the result for the state as a whole – always under strict monitoring, of course – and must announce it in the official press organ'.[6] That is Rittinghausen's proposal.

It must not be confused with the Swiss initiative. An initiative involves asking the population a specific question, which it must answer with either 'yes' or 'no'. Either the organisers of the initiative present the population with a formulated legal draft or, more commonly, they bring the demand for the abolition or introduction of a specific law to a vote. In the latter case, drafting the law that is being demanded falls to the representative body, parliament. Rittinghausen wants nothing to do with this:

> Legislation should develop organically from the people themselves; there must be an end to any drafting of legal bills by a body designed solely for that purpose, which then presents its work to be voted on by the people.[7]

In Rittinghausen's state, nobody has the right to submit a specific question, a specific motion, to the people to be voted on. When it comes to setting the question, each section is sovereign. Once a section of the population has suggested that this or that issue be legally regulated, then in the press and in assemblies

> proposals regarding the question will be made, developed and tested; the committee or the congress of those proposing the law will have put together their own proposals and recommended them, without impairing the freedom of the people's discussions. Do we think that in such circumstances it will be difficult for one or the other sections to correct

6 *Sozialdemokratische Abhandlungen*, Vol. 4, pp. 9–11.

7 Ibid., p. 7.

> the question of principle within the section? Do we believe that – if the question of principle is posed incorrectly – it will not be rebuked by the members of the sections?[8]

Rittinghausen is thus convinced that to all intents and purposes the same question will be proposed in each section, so that it will not be difficult to ascertain the will of the people from the votes cast in each of the sections.

He provides an example in order to convince us of this. He outlines the following scenario:

> 200,000 inhabitants of a large state become convinced that private landed property is a pernicious institution for the people and no longer compatible with the general good. If the question of land ownership now came before the sections, then the chairmen of the sections would naturally break down the matter into the following questions:
>
> 1. Should the country's land and soil remain in private ownership or become the common property of the nation? The majority is for it becoming the common property of the nation.
> 2. Should the land be bought back or simply be seized by the people without compensation for the landowners? The majority is for buying it back.
> 3. What percentage of compensation should there be for the property owner? Several percentages are proposed: one will achieve majority support.
> 4. How should compensation be carried out? In cash or in state obligations with interest? The latter is agreed on.
> 5. How should the state use the soil? By leasing to individuals or cooperatives? Or by cultivation for the account of the solidarity communities? The majority votes for the latter proposal.

So in Rittinghausen's state, the people – gathered together in sections – will easily solve the great question of land ownership in a single day.

But what if, in the 10,000 sections into which the population of a large state is divided, not all of the sections arrive at the question provided by Rittinghausen?

Rittinghausen thinks that it is only possible to be for or against private ownership of the land. He is wrong. Even among the supporters of private property

8 Ibid., pp. 16–17.

of the land, there are many who want to see some categories of land owned by the state; and even among the most pronounced opponents of private property of the land, there will be few who would wish to see all of the land in the country nationalised overnight at a single blow. This method smacks of those views on which our enemies base themselves, when they demand that we provide them with a plan for the state of the future. It smacks of the view that we wish to change society as a whole within twenty-four hours. On paper, of course, it is easy to declare all existing laws to be abolished and simply to decree common property in the means of production. But if we understand things not legally, but economically, if we bear in mind that our task is to develop a new mode of production and not merely to arrive at a few new legal formulae, then we will realise that mere templates, such as in Rittinhausen's questions, achieve nothing.

Were the question of land ownership to be presented to the various sections in a country where there is still a strong peasantry, then the majority would hardly declare itself in favour of unconditionally bringing the land into public ownership. And even many friends of common property will wish to proceed with the nationalisation of the land incrementally. Some will want to ensure that all of the smallholders are exempt from nationalisation. Others will initially perhaps only be in favour of the nationalisation of the forests, still others for the nationalisation of the mines, and a large number of people for the nationalisation of urban property; among these, there might also be some who only favour the nationalisation of uncultivated land and so on and so forth. In fact, the first question allows for a hundred different combinations.

As do all of the questions that follow. Rittinghausen extols his proposed legislative process for being simple and clear. He is confusing simplicity with the bandying about of templates. Let us take, for instance, the question of compensation. According to Rittinghausen, all landowners whose land has been taken should be equally compensated. Everyone should receive the same percentage of the value of their land. When it comes to compensation, then, the owner of a latifundia and a building-site profiteer are to be judged by the same standards as the small cottager! And what happens when it comes to mortgages?

And just like the compensation of the landowners, the cultivation of the land is also to proceed along the lines of a pre-made template: everywhere on the account of the municipalities. As if the most diverse modes of using the land are impossible, as if these modes could not exist alongside each other or even have to exist alongside each other! Are we to suppose that there are no citizens who believe that forests should be directly owned by the state, that the mines should be run by labour unions for the state, that the large

estates should be awarded to the agricultural cooperatives and that the housing sector should be entrusted to the municipalities or districts? Could some not even be of the view that the municipalities or districts should build individual houses with a garden and hire these out to individuals along the lines of the English cottage system? Such a scenario would see the land simultaneously used by the state, by large trade unions, by smaller cooperatives, by municipalities and districts and finally by individuals – all alongside each other. In reality, land-ownership relations would be even more varied than that! And Rittinghausen thinks that forcing this infinite variety of relations into a tiny Procrustean bed and cutting off everything that makes these relations viable is bringing simplicity and clarity to the legislative process! He might as well declare that the picturesque forms of an old oak would be best expressed in a chainsaw.

In reality, the method Rittinghausen proposes for legislation by the people would not lead to the simplification of the legislative process, but to its irrevocable confusion. Transferring the work of legislation from an assembly to ten thousand assemblies that meet alongside each other, and independently of each other, could only have one outcome: chaos. Here we are talking about transferring legislative activity from one assembly to ten thousand assemblies. Strictly speaking, this is not even true. Rittinghausen merely transfers one of the legislative activities to the legislative assemblies. When it comes to the others, he himself suspects that they can only be carried out in an assembly. But since he wants nothing to do with a legislative assembly, he simply conjures these functions away. Legislative activity does not merely consist of voting on legal bills. If the parliaments only had to do this, then parliamentary work would be easy. But legislation must above all ensure that the composition of a law fulfils its purpose; and when it is adopted, the parliament must see to it that the law is implemented and also monitor how it is implemented. As we have seen, the way in which the laws are drafted is of little concern to Rittinghausen. As he puts it in his *Sozialdemokratische Abhandlungen*, the ministry – or, as he proposes in his French pamphlet, an editorial commission – will, after the outcome of the vote in the sections has become known,

> produce a legal text that is clear and simple and that will have the advantage of not allowing for several interpretations, as most laws that come from our chambers do, where generally the assembly members constantly strive to encourage the jurists' inclination to obscurity.[9]

9 Rittinghausen 1892, p. 42.

Rittinghausen does not tell us why precisely this editorial commission will be god-blessed, in contrast to the devilish parliaments. Louis Blanc already raised this matter and explained how, in light of the chaotic effects of the votes with which the editorial commission would be confronted, in order to arrive at a simple and clear text, the commission would have to proceed in a much more arbitrary manner than any parliament that had been elected by universal suffrage.

Rittinghausen responded to this objection by arguing that if the editorial committee wanted to usurp parliamentary powers, then the people would immediately eliminate it. One could cope without formulating a legal text, he claimed.

Of course, he assumes that in each and every matter, every chairman of every section will put forward the same simple questions. The implementation of the law does not cause him any hassle. That will take care of itself. Thus, when it comes to the implementation of the law on land ownership mentioned above, he writes:

> Assessing the value of the land would be a matter for commissions which are elected in the communities and subject to popular control; the drawing up and the handover of state obligations to the former landowners as a means of compensation would need to be determined in more detail by a law drawn up by the people in the manner described above; finally, the way the land is used would be determined in accordance with the new law outlined above by decisions of the community sections.[10]

Just imagine how the peasant communities that voted for private property in the land will implement the new law through their commissions 'under the control of the people',[11] even if that law really was clearly and simply worded! Or is the ministry supposed to bring uniformity to the actions of the various communities? Who will then monitor the ministry? We do not get any answers to this question; nor to the question of who will determine the state budget. There is no parliament, the ministry has no initiative; the annual fixing of state income and expenditures is thus left to voluntary proposals from among the population! We really do not know why Rittinghausen found it necessary to combat anarchism.

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10 Rittinghausen 1877a, p. 26.

11 (Kautsky's footnote): Who is overseeing things here? Will every individual commission be controlled by the people as a whole? How does this happen? In reality, 'control by the people' would merely mean control by the local municipality.

CHAPTER 8

Drafting Laws

Rittinghausen places little value on the way in which laws are phrased. 'If the passing of a resolution' (by the people), he says, 'brings to light the really correct principle, then all the conclusions from this resolution can be outlined in such a simple and easily understandable number, that everybody is able to grasp it and to connect them'.[1] The matter does not strike us as that straightforward. A law is an attempt to influence social relations in a particular direction through a state order or ban. The direction in which relations move is provided by the interests of the state or the classes that rule it. But the state is not the only factor that impacts on social life. No monarch, no class, not even the people as a whole can shape these relations at will. The state is just one factor among many in society: it is influenced by the other factors just as much as it influences them. Like all of these factors, in the last analysis it is ruled by economic relations. Of course, Manchesterism and anarchism throw the baby out with the bathwater when they claim that the state's laws can only be a hindrance to social life; according to them, social life will be all the more perfect the less that the state patronises it. From this, the anarchists conclude that the state must be destroyed, whereas the Manchester men,[2] anxious about their money, advise the state[3] that it should only concern itself with the security police, and with more enthusiasm than they currently do at that. But it is certain that social relations set limits on the state authority, that laws only prove to be effective if they take these relations into account.

A state law is something quite different to a scientific law. A scientific law is a mere principle, a tenet, a rule that comes to light when we extract what is general and the correlations from a series of uniform processes. In order to arrive at such laws, science must abstract, it must put aside all the particular elements that interfere with the workings of the law in reality, so that the law does not assert itself in a pure manner. By contrast, a state law determines a rule which is yet to be enforced, which is not necessarily seen as applicable under

1 Rittinghausen 1877, p. 15.

2 A reference to the Manchester liberals such as Richard Cobden (1804–65) and John Bright (1811–89). For a discussion of Kautsky's relationship to the ideas of Manchesterism, see Macnair (ed.) 2013, pp. 5–39.

3 (Kautsky's foonote): Or rather *advised* the state, because an Orthodox Manchesterist has become as rare as a genuine Christian.

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certain conditions and which is looked over again and again. It is only the state power which wants to force the principle of the law to become the rule, and in order to do this it must consider precisely all of those factors which might limit the law's effectiveness or even to transform it into its opposite. This fact alone ensures that in a society as complex as ours, if they are to fulfil their purpose, laws must not merely contain principles, but must be drawn up in detail and with the greatest care.

But this is also necessary because in our society legislation can only influence social relations indirectly and in a piecemeal fashion. Capitalist society is one of highly developed commodity production. This society is made up of thousands of enterprises – hundreds of thousands, even – none of whom produce for their own needs, but for the market. This requires each of these enterprises to own its own means of production, independently of the other enterprises and the society as a whole. It also requires the rule of private property in the means of production and, further, presupposes that society does not regulate production according to a plan, but that the regulator of production is free competition. In such a mode of production, however, economic relations, and social relations in general, outgrow society. People are not able to control these relations, but rather are controlled by them. Legislation can only interfere in these relations indirectly. Direct legal intervention presupposes that the community is the master of production: in other words, that there is socialist production. In capitalist society, the state can usually only intervene in socio-economic relations in a roundabout way. If the state thinks that too little grain is being grown, then it cannot order by law that more land should be used for that purpose. The state can only attempt to facilitate the growth of grain, such as through tax relief, reducing railway tariffs or through protective tariffs, bonuses and so on – and even then it remains questionable whether the state will achieve its goal and whether it might do more harm than good.

Thus it is completely insufficient for a law merely to pronounce a principle. Everything depends on the individual measures which are used in order to achieve the aims of the legislator. These measures do not at all flow by themselves from the principles on which the law is based. Determining these measures can – or should, at least – only occur on the basis of a close study of relations; the legislator must accurately define them.

But not only does legislation only affect society indirectly, it also influences it only in a piecemeal fashion; not through one single law, but through a series of laws – an endless series of laws. Each law only deals with a small part of social life. Society is, nonetheless, a uniform organism. Thus if legislation is to be effective, it must also be uniform, the individual laws must be in line with, and not contradict, each other. Bringing uniformity into legislation and maintain-

ing it are thus important tasks. These tasks fall to legal science, and in this sense the participation of lawyers in the production of laws is essential. Maintaining uniformity in legislation is more likely, the more that the government and the ruling parties pursue principled politics and the more conscientiously they proceed in the legislative process. By contrast, the more that those involved in the legislative process allow themselves to be guided by momentary interests, such as the whims of high gentlemen, and the more recklessly they proceed, the more confused the law will become, the less effective that arbitrary laws and exceptional laws will be, and the more miserable jurisprudence will become.

From this point of view, too, the thorough preparation and careful drafting of laws is absolutely necessary. In addition to this there is a further fact – perhaps the most important one of all. In today's society, with its various trenchant conflicts of interest, there should be few laws that infringe upon certain personal or class interests either permanently or at least for a time, just as, on the other hand, each and every law serves specific interests. Everybody affected by the law therefore strives to interpret it in a manner that is in his best interest. A particular race of human beings, the jurists, has emerged for this purpose. Their job is to get an interpretation of the law that is most favourable for their clients. If the jurist, as a theoretician, strives to bring uniformity to legislation, as a practitioner he will attempt to exploit any gaps, contradictions and ambiguities in the legislation in order to gain advantages for the cause he is representing. An indispensable requirement of each and every law is that it is written as precisely as possible, making it impossible to interpret it any other way than a very specific manner. But arriving at this version is not always a simple matter. Even among the friends of a particular legal provision, there are often the most diverse views about the text which best brings out the law's purpose. This requires splitting hairs in order to avoid splitting hairs again later.

But if the friends of a law which they would like to see enacted have every reason to press for its most accurate and appropriate formulation, then the opponents of that law have every reason, if they are unable to prevent the law being passed, to ensure that it is written in a way that weakens its effectiveness as a law as much as possible.

The more imprecisely the law is drafted, the more scope the authorities who have to implement the law have to interpret that law in an arbitrary fashion. But the diversity of interests provides yet another reason why the letter of the law should be formulated as carefully as possible. While every law corresponds to certain interests, in fact it corresponds not to one particular interest, but – as a rule – highly diverse interests. It very rarely happens that, in a democratic state, a provision is seen as a law, that is to say, approved by the majority of the population, if it merely corresponds to the interest of a single class or a

layer of the population. And even where a single class were to make up the majority of the population, different groups with different interests will form within that class. Finally, even within the same interest groups or within the same party, disagreements will arise concerning the way certain interests are to be achieved. In short, every law is based on a compromise of the most varied interests, always at least of different views. Rejecting all compromises means making any legislation impossible. This is not only true of legislation passed in parliament, but also of legislation by the people, as is shown by the example of Switzerland. Several classes and parties were always involved in the laws that came into existence as a result of referenda or initiatives. But precisely because every law is a compromise, all of the classes, parties or groups involved in creating that law must carefully pay attention to ensure that it is written in a way that corresponds to its specific interests and views. Drafting a law is thus a most important matter that requires just as much knowledge as it does expertise. Not for nothing, then, do some of the fiercest struggles in parliament concern the wording of the law, and not for nothing does parliamentary procedure everywhere strive for as many provisos against putting together laws in a lewd and hasty manner. Alone the development of a reasonably appropriate legal bill that is to be presented to parliament causes considerable difficulties. Those who helped to work on the drafting of the social-democratic Reichstag fraction's worker-protection laws can tell us all about this. It is also misplaced to reproach this fraction for not inundating the Reichstag with legal drafts by way of a protest. Had these drafts been hastily drawn up, then they would demonstrate something other than what their authors intended; they would provide an opportunity not to prove the evil will of our enemies, but to indict social democracy for being unable to produce something suitable. In most cases, carefully preparing legal drafts would mean a waste of time and effort, because they would be strangled by our opponents anyway. There are simpler and more effective methods of demonstrating that our enemies are not serious when they deploy social-reformist phrases. For parties in opposition, drawing up legislative proposals is only advisable in particularly important occasions or in the few cases where they believe that it is possible to achieve immediate practical success. In the overwhelming majority of cases, initiatives for laws, so-called 'positive' work, will have to originate with the majority of parliament, or the government; the government may expect that their legal bills will not remain bills; they have at their disposal the necessary legal and other expert assistants, the necessary statistical and other materials and so on. There is nothing more ridiculous or wrong than the constantly recurring charge against social democracy that it is not able to achieve anything positive in the legislative process and only knows how to negate. If social democracy predominantly conducts

criticism in parliament, then this is not because it does not know to make positive proposals, but rather because it is in the minority; but in no parliamentary country is it the task of the minority to intervene in the legislative process in anything but a critical fashion. We have more than enough suggestions to make – our programme proves that. But as long as we remain a minority party, social democracy rarely has cause to convert one or other of our proposals into a legal draft.

But criticising a legal draft does not in any way mean acting in a solely negative fashion. In most cases, criticising a bill also means attempting to improve it. Parliament as a whole participates in this work, not just the majority, but the minority too; not just those who approve of the principle underlying a law, but also those who reject it. Because the effectiveness of a law depends on its formulation, weakening this effectiveness can only be the task of those who are convinced that the law will be harmful. As much preparatory work as the drafting of bills has often caused, there is even more work demanded by discussing these bills in parliament, in the meetings of the fractions and the commissions, as well as in the repeated negotiations in the plenary. If the law is an important one, if it affects great interests, then as a rule, consultation on the law leads to countless amendments and endless discussions. Who wishes to deny that this wastes a lot of time or that people do not get anywhere very fast? But it seems to us that this is a characteristic – or disadvantage, if we want to call it that – not merely of parliamentarism, but of all free discussion. If this is an argument against parliamentarism, then it would also be an argument against freedom of assembly and freedom of the press. The evil would not be reduced if, as Rittinghausen wishes, in the place of parliament there were ten thousand parliaments, each of which with one thousand members.

But whatever we think about the importance of the negotiations in parliament, in today's conditions they are – if we do not wish to see the drafting of laws as the monopoly of a few individuals – the only way of making it possible to improve legislative proposals, and with the participation of various and on occasion all major groups and parties in the state at that. Hitherto, at least, no other way of doing so has been demonstrated.

Drafting a law and improving a legislative bill is incompatible with Rittinghausen's method of legislation by the people. But the Swiss initiative also has the defect of not allowing amendments to draft legislation. The effects of this will become quite palpable if draft legislation comes from the midst of the people in order to be put to the population for voting. Such drafts must be accepted or rejected as they are. If those proposing the law have not immediately found the correct form of expressing the purpose of the law in all points, then the draft will also be rejected by those who agree with the motivations of

those moving it. Either that, or it will be adopted but fail to serve its original purpose. The form of the initiative that is closest to Rittinghausen's proposal, in that it puts the representative body to one side (it differs from his proposal in one fundamental point, namely that Rittinghausen sees a formulated legislative proposal as an undue restriction of the popular will) is also the form that has been least applied in practice. Only a few cantons have introduced this type of initiative, and as far as we know it has not acquired any significance. Most cantons, and the Swiss Confederation too, are only familiar with the form of the initiative that enables the people to encourage the representative body to develop a specific law. They thereby recognise that as a rule laws cannot be developed by private individuals and that this important function must be left to the representative assembly. A modern democratic state will not be able to go beyond this form of the initiative.

CHAPTER 9

Implementing Laws

As important as the careful drafting of laws is, even the best law is nothing if it remains on paper or is implemented arbitrarily. Watching over the implementation of the law, therefore, has always been one of the most important functions of a legislative assembly.

The law is not only binding on citizens, it is also binding on the state authority. The law sets limits on the arbitrariness of the state. The guardians of the law are thus just as prone to the temptation of taking the illegal path as the 'lawless classes' – that is to say, those elements of the population whose doings, aspirations and inclinations are particularly restricted by the law. The temptation for the authorities to act illegally is all the greater, the less they are controlled and the greater their power. That is why absolutism is much more intolerable in the modern state than, for instance, in the Oriental sultanate. There, despotism forms the superstructure of a society, which, aside from a small urban population, consists of village communities which are fully independent economically and which do not have any organic relations with each other. State power only confronts the individual through the mediation of the democratically organised municipality; state taxes, for example, are not paid by individual people, but by the village communities. The individual is not isolated or defenceless in the face of the state, but the state authority has little case to take care of the individual. The whims of Oriental despotism are often fatal for its immediate environment, but the mass of the population is rarely affected by the intrigues and revolutions in the sultan's palace. In the European absolutist state of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, all of the individual's defences *vis-à-vis* the state power disappeared. The state power did not tolerate any independent organisations alongside it. All the functions which were otherwise fulfilled by the self-activity of autonomous municipalities and cooperatives became functions of the state police; the state police saw itself as omniscient and almighty and acted according to this conceit. It represented the highest authority and did not consider itself bound by any law. For this authority, laws were merely handles for harassment, torture and extortion in particular.

Much worse than absolutism's legislation was the actual lawlessness of its officials. In modern Europe, these officials were the first to outrage the population as a whole and outraged them the most. They weigh down most intolerably on modern Russia.

Democracy seeks to restrict the regime of the officials as much as possible, to pass as many of its functions as possible over to the self-activity of the com-

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munes and the free associations again. But this endeavour has its limits. Just like the capitalist mode of production, the capitalist state pushes for ever greater centralisation. And the tasks which society sets the state become increasingly numerous and large. The number of state officials and their functions is therefore in a constant state of growth. Accordingly, controlling the centre of the state power, the government, becomes all the more important, because the officialdom as a whole is subject to it. Until now, however, the only known way of doing this was through a representative assembly. Even the advocates of direct legislation do not specify any other way. The right of control of the government and its officials is highly valuable to the minorities, the opposition parties, in particular; for them it is the most precious right of parliament. Of course, they can only have a small influence in the field of legislation. By contrast, if a parliamentary representative is honest and possesses courage and skill, then it is possible for him to uncover abuses in the state administration and to denounce them accordingly. Even in a parliament that is as powerless and servile as the Prussian parliament, the presence of the social-democratic deputies is a thorn in the side of the government and a certain barrier against all too much arbitrariness and brutality on the part of the authorities. And do we need to remind ourselves of the effect that the weighty accusations of the social-democratic deputies had – first and foremost on the mass of the population, but also on the ruling circles in the German Reichstag – when it came to debates on extending the state of siege in Berlin, Hamburg and so on, or in the debates on soldier abuse? The abolition of the representative system also means the abolition of any effective control over the government. Whoever eliminates the representative body of the people thereby also eliminates the stage from which those indicting the ruling system are able to speak to the people as a whole. In each of Rittinghausen's 10,000 sections, every speaker merely addresses one ten-thousandth of the people. He has no ministers before him who have to respond to his speech and answer his questions (or does Rittinghausen think that ten thousand sectional ministers should be deployed?) and his comments may well be covered up, as so much else is when it comes to comments made by individuals in the popular assemblies and even in the press. At best, it would cause ten thousand times as much work to bring the affair to the population as a whole than a parliamentary debate would. But, of course, Rittinghausen believed that in his state there would not be any indictments of ministers because these ministers would be elected by the people. 'The Minister's College is to be appointed to manage state business through universal direct suffrage'.[1] But since when

1 Rittinghausen 1877, p. 9.

has the election of an official by the people been a guarantee for impeccable behaviour on his part? Does not Rittinghausen himself say that it is impossible to have general interests represented by private interests, and that the people should not trust the legislators that it has elected? Does he not repeat the words of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, that the English are only free on the day of the election? And does he believe that abuse of the state authority by ministers is abolished due to the fact that ministers are elected by the people? Are ministers somehow subject to fewer temptations than parliamentarians, or are they more powerless? Parliamentarians can only influence the state indirectly via the government. It is the government that directly presides over the immense state power as a whole. And in a parliament the most various tendencies are always represented. The majority is subject to the criticism of the minority. By contrast, a government ministry must be united; wherever there is a coalition government, this merely proves that the differences between the parties have ceased to be differences of principle. While it is possible to govern a state without any principles, it is impossible to do so according to different principles at the same time. In the government, then, the control of the majority by the minority and the power of the government in the modern state is absent, and the power of the government in the modern state is much more comprehensive and immediate than that of a parliament. And yet Rittinghausen declares that any parliament must, with natural necessity, always betray the people – even a parliament that is completely dependent on the people with the most extensive suffrage and the greatest electoral freedom for a short period of time – two to three years – and that is also subject to the control of the referendum and the initiative. But a government ministry, if elected, is supposed to be an obedient servant of the people purely on the basis that it was elected. Here and there, of course, he has concerns about the fact that, in his state, nothing stands opposed to the enormous centralised state power than a population that has been split up into 10,000 sections. On occasion, he alludes to the necessity of a control commission, a monitoring committee. This would, of course, be elected and thus be a representative assembly. It is of no use. However much the advocates of direct legislation may twist and turn, they must repeatedly transfer the functions of the legislative assembly – except for the final vote on legal bills – to representative assemblies if they ever want to see these functions carried out. Of course, it is quite unimportant if these assemblies are now called parliaments, editorial commissions or monitoring committees; if the idiosyncrasies of the opponents of parliamentarism merely extend to the name, then it is easy to help them. The representative system will always re-emerge, however often they may destroy it.

Editorial commissions and monitoring committees will not be able to function without certain rights; if their business is to have a purpose, then they must

be able to pass resolutions, and the government will have to respect these resolutions. They will thus only be able to work if they have certain functions. If all major interests and interest groups, all parties and tendencies in the population, are to be represented in these assemblies, then it will be necessary to make the number of its members large enough to be compatible with the aims of a consultative assembly, that is to say, about as large as the number of members of the current parliaments.

Finally, it is necessary to realise that it is a pure waste of energy to have two chambers meet alongside each other that are elected on the basis of equal suffrage, that is to say that contain the same parties in equal proportion; two chambers whose functions so often overlap, that nothing changes as a result, except that the work of these representative bodies of the people will be simplified if the editorial commission and the monitoring committee were united – and finally, we will once again arrive at a situation that already exists today in Switzerland: a parliament controlled by referenda.

But since the citizens who elect the representative assembly are the same who vote on its legal bills, in most cases we shall find that the vote by the population and the vote by the legislative assembly coincide. Only in rare cases, when in this assembly no party has a decisive majority, or if it is dealing with a law of particular importance that stirs the population and drives the indifferent, unpredictable elements of the population to the ballot box who would usually stay away from it, only then might there here and there be a difference between the people's vote and that of the representative body of the people – provided, of course, that this assembly has been elected by a suffrage that is equal and universal in every respect and merely for a short period of time. The writer of these lines therefore believes that he has no reason to change in the slightest the sentence in his commentary on the Erfurt programme which has caused such indignation amongst the supporters of direct legislation. It reads:

> Direct legislation by the people cannot, at least in a large modern state … render parliament superfluous, at best it can operate alongside parliament in order to correct it in individual cases. It is absolutely impossible for direct legislation to take care of the whole of the state's legislation and it is just as impossible for it to oversee the state administration or, if necessary, to guide it. For as long as the modern state exists, the focus of political activity will always lie in its parliament.[2]

2 Kautsky 1892, Chapter 5.

We have all the less reason to desist from this point of view as the practice of the supporters of direct legislation by the people speaks in our favour. Just as the development of the modern state has with necessity led to the delegation of the regulation of state affairs to a delegate assembly, so all organisations – political parties in particular – that extend over a larger area, that of the state or even beyond, are compelled to deploy the same means in order to regulate their affairs: our century is not merely the century of parliamentarism, but also of congresses. Social democracy follows the example of the other parties even in places such as Switzerland, for instance, where no laws would prevent it from running its affairs according to Rittinghausen's recipe. Why do Rittinghausen's supporters not propose to our Swiss comrades that they refrain from party congresses and have party affairs taken care of solely through discussions and votes in the sections? Why do they treat the party congresses as something necessary and self-evident? Hitherto, all importance decisions in social-democratic party life everywhere have been taken by congresses, delegate assemblies; congresses were necessary in order to argue out contradictions and to eliminate misunderstandings; they were necessary in order to sanction mergers or splits and to discuss and decide upon all important matters of principle and tactics. At most, referenda were used to confirm the result or to elect people or localities. The representative system is the only form in which the party as a whole can convene, come to an understanding and make its decisions. Only a congress makes it possible to express the will of the party as a whole, only a congress maintains consistency in the party. As long as social democracy considers the form of representative assemblies indispensable for the regulation of its affairs, it would make itself look ridiculous if it rejected this form in principle. We can leave this childish but harmless pleasure to the anarchists; they may rant about the immorality of the representative system as much as they wish.

CHAPTER 10

Jurisprudence and the Press

We believe that we have sufficiently shown what an absurdity is Rittinghausen's method of popular legislation.

Indeed, it would be highly surprising if it were possible to enact his method, because it completely contradicts the general law of social development, which entails a constant increase in the division of labour, or differentiation.

The need to do everything oneself, and the conviction of having understood everything best oneself, descends from past times when the individual household and the individual economic enterprise produced what they needed for themselves.

Even small craftsmen must still take care of the most various functions. They are not merely industrial workers; they also buy raw materials and bring them home; they bring their products to market and sell them there; if they keep accounts at all, then they must do this too.

But if an enterprise is to expand, if it is to become a large enterprise, then it is simply impossible for its owner to take care of everything that is necessary to conduct its business.

He must employ officials, accountants, factory workers, market helpers, travellers and so on. Nonetheless, their interests are not the same as his; as a rule they will not display the same diligence as the person for whom they are working; indeed, they can deceive and even ruin him through negligence and trickery. But has this consideration ever prevented an entrepreneur from making the move from a small enterprise to a large one, if he was able to do so?

The fact that the individual producer can no longer do everything himself, that he must delegate some of the functions he previously carried out himself to others, might appear to be disadvantageous, but it is inexorably linked with the progress from the small enterprise to the large enterprise.

It is impossible to purchase its immense advantages without taking its disadvantages into account. Should we therefore do without the large enterprise?

Or should we even make the crazy attempt to find a form of large enterprise in which each individual worker carries out the functions that fall to him in a fashion that is just as independent as the producer of the small enterprise?

Certainly not. We will retain the division of functions and merely strive towards reducing the disadvantages associated with this division as much as possible.

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The entrepreneur seeks to protect himself against fraud and negligence on the part of his officials by carefully selecting them, by the closest possible control over them and by the right to dismiss them again.

Alongside this, there are also other methods of overcoming the drawbacks of the division of functions, above reconciling the private interests of the individual workers with the interests of the enterprise as a whole.

Already today some entrepreneurs are pursuing this goal, under the capitalist form of the large enterprise through the provision of profit sharing. But it can only be completely realised through the socialist form of the large enterprise.

What has been discussed here in terms of an industrial enterprise is also true of the largest social enterprise, the state.

A modern state is simply unviable without delegating the various functions which once fell to the popular assembly to separate authorities or assemblies.

This is necessary not simply due to superficial considerations – the vast dimensions of the state, the number of those living within it, but above all due to the fact that these functions have become far too extensive for the population as a whole to have time to carry them out sufficiently alongside their other duties.

Let us not forget that this situation also set in already in the period of barbarism, when the tasks of legislation were still negligible.

Even then, when it seemed as if popular legislation was still dominant, it was merely a section of the people who passed laws for the people as a whole: among the Ancient Germans only the men were legislators.

In Rome and Athens, the citizens' congregations passed laws not merely for women, but also for slaves, for the migrants from abroad, for the 'confederates' and for the subjected peoples.

In the Middle Ages, the development of production led to a situation where the legislative functions (insofar as one can talk of such things back then) fell to the aristocracy and, in particular, to the clergy. They carried out these functions at the Diets and courtly gatherings, at the Synods and the religious councils.

But we have also seen how the development of society led to the separation of the functions of legislation from the functions of the judge. Originally the popular assemblies had combined both functions.

Today, probably not even the most committed advocates of direct legislation would attempt to have the dispensation of justice taken care of by the people as a whole. It has become necessary to hand it over to particular officials.

The judiciary cannot be made democratic by convening the 1000 or so sections in order for them to examine and pass judgement on every legal case, but

only by the people obtaining the right in relation to the judges which the capitalist enjoys in relation to his officials: that is to say, the right to choose to keep tabs on them.

Insofar as the people intervene in the dispensation of justice, it does so through a kind of representative system – the jury.

But usually even these juries only carry out judicial functions.

They affirm or deny the question of guilt. Directing the legal process – and, as a rule, the assessment of the punishment involved – is up to the professional judge. But it is not only the functions of the legislator and the judge which have been transferred to specific bodies, but even a function which one could assume that cannot be transferred at all: the formation and proclamation of public opinion, the exchange of ideas on public affairs.

Lothar Bucher puts it very nicely:

> The exchange of ideas, otherwise conducted directly between two individuals, is now carried out by delegates, by the newspapers.
>
> This change occurs in parallel, and in constant interaction, with the development of the representative system, and the effects of these phenomena can be shown very graphically, that is to say in a mathematical fashion.
>
> Thousands upon thousands of citizens become absorbed in a newspaper, and the infinite number of possible combinations of individuals, smaller and larger discussion groups, in which knowledge, observations and thoughts come into fruitful contact with each other, disappears into a dozen journalistic contrasts or shades.
>
> Occupying oneself with the public affairs of the municipality and the country are transformed from a civic duty or civic honour into a line of business, a trade.[1]

And so on. His comparison of the press and the representative system is quite correct; the difference between the press and parliament, however, is that a subscriber to a newspaper has even less influence on his newspaper than the voter has on parliament.

The latter, after all, makes a free choice from different candidates; the journalists, on the other hand, appoint themselves as the representatives of public opinion, or are appointed as such by one or another capitalist.

1 Bucher 1881, pp. 231 ff.

Everybody is free to choose their own newspaper, of course, but the choice of newspapers is not that great. What makes a newspaper indispensable to the reader is not the views it represents, but rather the news it provides.

Since today, in the last instance, the world market dominates the entire of social life, then each and every person who is interested in political and economic life must follow developments in the world as a whole.

But gathering together all of the news from the entire civilised world is impossible for an individual. The newspapers are apparatuses that gather these news items and convey them to the public.

The establishment and maintenance of such an apparatus is extremely expensive – and becomes even more expensive, the more that global communications expand. The major daily newspapers are thus necessarily capitalist enterprises. But even the rest of the press increasingly becomes a slave to capitalist exploitation.

From a representative of the interests of the public, it therefore becomes in reality a representative of the interests of capital.

The little influence that newspaper readers exert on their newspapers was shown for example in Vienna, where the majority of the newspaper-reading public were anti-Semitic.

Nevertheless, the 'Jewish press' blossomed far more than the anti-Semitic newspapers, which just stagnated for a long time. The Viennese philistine scolds the 'Jewish papers' terribly, but he buys and reads them over and again.

Without any accountability towards its readers, the press has thus become far more corrupt than parliamentarism ever was – even in its worst forms. It rules in a far more unrestricted fashion than any parliament, it stands above any criticism far more than any parliament, church or sovereign has.

Everything is subject to the criticism of the press; but woe to the person who criticises it; he is excommunicated or, as we say today, boycotted. Never does the criticism of the press get through to the broader public, because whatever the press does not report did not happen for the mass of the population, even if it were truly outrageous.

The conspiracy of silence muzzles uncomfortable doctrines far more effectively than the dungeons of the Inquisition were able to.

In fact, if one compares the church and the press then it is possible to discover some similarity between the two.[2]

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2 (Kautsky's footnote): Lothar Bucher wrote that the Ancients would have made 'public opinion', if they had been aware of such a thing, just as much of a God as Nemesis: 'It is a proper deity also in the sense that it is a pillow for laziness, and also in the sense that it is possible to dictate the oracle's spells, but not everybody can do this. If our symbolism and art were not so

But for the most part, such a comparison does not fall in favour of the press. The worst priests of the Middle Ages were not able to lead the believers in their faith by the nose, to exploit them, to keep them in ignorance and to demoralise them in as shameful a manner as a large part of today's journalism is able to do.[3]

Should we therefore strive to abolish the press?

Or should we perhaps demand that the popular newspapers should be edited by the people directly? As of yet, this demand has only been proposed by some anarchists. With the immense proportions that the circles of economic and political life in which we live today have assumed, it is simply inconceivable to exist without newspapers; but the fact that newspapers should be produced by a particular profession is just as necessary as the existence of newspapers.

But if there is no way of breaking the boundless rule of a corrupt journalism? As with so many other problems, the emergence of the proletariat brings with it the solution of the press problem.

The readers and purchasers of bourgeois newspapers form a disjointed mass. When it comes to the workers' press, things are quite different. It often depends on large organisations. Wage workers are compelled by the particular social conditions in which they exist to join together in large numbers – and not just in order to achieve temporary goals either.

They form the first class which in the modern state has created permanent national and indeed international organisations on a mass scale. And through its organisation, the proletariat is able to create its own press.

It is the organisation that creates and attracts readers and purchasers; the immense costs which a bourgeois newspaper must expend when creating a readership are thereby to a large extent overcome.

The workers' newspapers require only a relatively small amount of capital for their creation; in favourable circumstances, when the workers' organisations are particularly well-organised, disciplined and vast, it is possible for these

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degenerate, then we would have built temples to it a long time ago. Thus it must be content with the little private chapel which everybody builds for it' (Bucher 1881, p. 25). Of course, Bucher explains the omnipotence of the press – in a genuinely ideological manner – not due to its social functions but due to the 'need for authority, for willing submission, which always informs the mass of the people'. Explaining authority by the need for authority is somewhat reminiscent of the candidate of medicine who explained that the soporific effect of opium came as a result of its inherent soporific force.

3 (Kautsky's footnote): The new church already appears to have a new religion as well. The Nietzschean *Übermensch*, who stands above the consciousness of the herd and beyond good and evil is none other than the journalist who flouts the public opinion he himself creates and who dominates and exploits the large herd by virtue of the belief in public opinion.

organisations to establish a daily newspaper without any resources and for this newspaper to blossom. This is how capital's monopoly over the press can be broken.

But this situation, in which it is possible for a workers' newspaper to come into existence and to survive with little or even no capital at all, also renders it completely dependent on its readers. Since it draws its strength not from its capital, but from the workers' organisations that are behind it, the newspaper is actually in their hands, even if – legally speaking – it is a private enterprise and not the property of a trade-union or political organisation.

Whoever edits such a newspaper, and how he edits it, are not the private affairs of its owners or editors. In the last instance, the organised workers decide on such matters themselves. Thus it is not the journalist who makes public opinion of those circles in whose names he speaks – essentially, he expresses what these people really feel.

This relationship is always one that has repeatedly repelled the bourgeois literati, however much they felt attracted by the blossoming social-democratic press and however much they believed that they could find an audience among the 'stupid workers' who could possibly be even more easily impressed than other readers, and at whose expense it might be possible to advance their careers more easily than in the bourgeois press.

When they became aware of their error, they regularly clamoured about the suppression of individual freedom and about corruption. As a rule they ended up – in order to escape the tyranny of the party and its corruption – by selling themselves to a capitalist.

But what journalists perceive to be vilification because they are too selfish and presumptuous to place themselves in the service of a cause, however great they may be, is in truth an ennoblement.

Morally, the workers' press soars above the bourgeois press; it also towers above it intellectually – if not in absolute terms, then nonetheless always in relative terms, namely in relation to the resources it commands.

And the travelling ruble has never ventured into the workers' press, nor has the Wels fund or the Panama Society's[4] hush money. There is no other press that the ruling classes would like to buy more than the workers' press; no other press is edited by such poor people as this press: and yet it has remained so pure that not even the dirtiest detractors of the labour movement have dared to accuse them of being open to corruption.

4 The Panama Society was established in order to fund and oversee the construction of the Panama canal, following the success of the building of the Suez canal in 1869. The Panama Society was later embroiled in a corruption scandal – the largest of the nineteenth century.

Thus, under the influence of the proletariat, the press acquires a character that is very different to the usual character of the press in the capitalist world. From a means of making the mass of the population subservient to the political and economic aims of the capitalists – of stupefying them and demoralising them – the press becomes an effective, spirited weapon in the struggle against exploitation and corruption, in the struggle for the intellectual, moral and physical rebirth of the working classes.

Should things not be similar when it comes to parliamentarism?

CHAPTER 11

Parliamentarism and the Parties in England

There is a widespread view that the representative system necessarily signifies the rule of the bourgeoisie. 'If there is one undeniable truth', wrote Rittinghausen in 1869:

> then it is the truth first established by me twenty years ago, that each order of affairs which determines the relationships of state citizens to each other and regulates their labour and property relations corresponds to a particular form of government, which is simultaneously a means of implementing and preserving that order.

Further:

> The aristocracy and the bourgeoisie had actually recognised this truth to a certain extent, but only insofar as it affected their own interests. Both estates were conscious that the class rule of the former builds on the governmental form of the despotic monarchy, whereas that of the latter can only be produced and maintained through the so-called representative system. But even this conviction was not free of errors either. For example, the bourgeois estate had no idea that the introduction of universal suffrage, which it feared so much, would not be able to change anything regarding the essence of the representative system.[1]

We regret that we have to dispute this most indisputable of all truths in the strongest terms. It is a fable that the representative system is indissolubly linked with the rule of the bourgeoisie. A glance at history destroys such a view. The representative system is a political form that can assume, and has assumed, the most diverse content. The same is true of the despotic monarchy.

In most European states, the class rule of the bourgeoisie was ushered in not by the representative system but by absolutism. In the eighteenth century, where until the French Revolution there were limited monarchies, the representative system was a means of the class rule of the nobility. This is not only true of Poland and Sweden but – as we have already seen – of England

1 Rittinghausen 1877, p. 1.

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too. It is well known that the English parliament consists of two houses: the upper house, the House of Lords, and the lower house, the House of Commons. The former was, of course, a class representation of the large landowners from the outset and has remained so until today; it was made up of, and even now is predominantly made up of, the heads of the large families of the aristocracy. But what were the factors that made the English lower house into a means of the rule of the landed aristocracy in the eighteenth century?

On the one hand, it was the social importance that the large landowners were able to preserve, and even to reinforce, in relation to the other classes. On the other, it was a system of suffrage which corresponded to the interests of the aristocracy. The constituency boundaries in England clung firmly, and indeed today continue to cling firmly, to the old feudal distinction between the counties, the rural districts and the urban constituencies. From the outset, land ownership was dominant in the rural districts; only the landowners ('freeholders') with more than 40 shillings in ground rent had the right to vote. The more that small land ownership dwindled in the course of the eighteenth century, the more the rural districts fell into the hands of the large landowners. But in most cities things were even more favourable to the large landowners. We have already pointed out that the capitalist mode of production has a tendency to concentrate the population in a few cities, to inhibit the development of the small towns that are situated away from the traffic infrastructure and to let these towns degenerate.

This manifested itself particularly clearly in England. Most of the burgeoning cities – with the exception of the City of London – were new creations and were situated on the territories of a few large landowners. When it came to the right to vote, these cities simply did not exist. In the old towns, electoral conditions were highly varied; each town originally determined its own right to vote. The more they degenerated, the more that fresh life was taken from them, the more ossified and artificial suffrage became, the more the circle of those entitled to vote narrowed into a clique.

Before the Reform Bill[2] of 1832 there were 111 urban constituencies with fewer than 200 voters, of which 46 had fewer than 50 voters. Old Sarum had a mere 12 voters! Voting was conducted publicly through a show of hands.

No wonder that interference in the voting and bribery blossomed. Such things were very easy amongst such a small number of voters – and became even easier, the fewer opportunities for earning a living that the country towns

2 The first of three major electoral reforms in nineteenth-century Britain (the other two came in 1867 and 1885).

were able to offer. For many towns, the sale of votes became the most profitable source of income.[3]

Pitt[4] – who in 1782 brought a bill to parliament which would ensure that 36 of the most rotten boroughs would lose the right to vote – officially recognised the sale of votes as a regular and legitimate source of income. As compensation for the loss of their vested right to bribery, Pitt offered them the trifle of one million pounds, or 20 million marks. Property is sacred![5]

Nonetheless, one must not think that electoral bribery is peculiar to parliamentarism. Bribery played a large role in the election of officials in the popular assemblies – that is to say, under the regime of direct legislation by the people – in Athens and Rome. But electoral corruption was not unknown in the quaint rural communities of Switzerland either, as is shown by the laws which were passed against it. This corruption could be found in all of the cantons that commanded tributary lands which they exploited. The office of a bailiff in the tributary lands was very lucrative and in the election for such an office it was worth buying the voters either with large hospitality or directly with money.

As long as an elected office is a means of enrichment, electoral bribes – or at least attempts to engage in them – will endure. But this electoral system was still not sufficient for the aristocracy. In order to be completely sure, it decreed that deputies from a rural constituency had to receive a ground rent of 600 pounds sterling. Even the urban deputies had to be landowners with an income from ground rent of at least 300 pounds sterling. Through these electoral laws, the aristocracy secured the dominance that it had won. In this way, parliament became an instrument of the class rule of the landowners.

But the landowners themselves fell into two parties. On the one hand, there were the modern, capitalist-minded landowners who benefited from capitalist development, the promotion of trade, colonial policy and the capitalist tenancy system. On the other hand, there were the conservative landowners whose hearts still clung to the feudal methods of exploitation. The former, the Whigs, had the bourgeoisie for themselves. Economically, they were superior to the other classes and represented the idea that the rule of parliament on the basis

3 (Kautsky's footnote): At the close of the eighteenth century, the expenditure of the boroughs, the vote purchasers of the small constituencies, was once calculated at 1,260,000 pounds sterling (over 25 million marks).

In order not to have to engage in such a costly pleasure all too often, already under George I the parliamentary periods had been extended from three to seven years. This period still applies today.

4 William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806) was a British politician and Prime Minister on two different occasions. He actually made it into parliament through one of the very 'rotten boroughs' he came to oppose.

5 Gneist 1886, p. 356; p. 359.

it found itself at the time was the most adequate form for the class rule of the aristocracy. By contrast, the others – the Tories – were economically backward and weak and thought it best if the landed aristocracy attempted to assert itself in the state in the same way as the French aristocracy did, by exploiting the monarchy. While the Whigs were representatives of the omnipotence of parliament, the Tories demanded a sovereign monarchy.

However, the character of the Tories changed in the course of the eighteenth century. Parliamentary rule became too deeply rooted for a statesman to think seriously about unsettling it. At the same time, however, the Tory families became just as suffused with capitalist interests as their Whig counterparts. The differences between both parties dwindled more and more and eventually they were no greater than the differences which emerged within each of the parties. If the antagonism between the two parties nonetheless persisted then this was simply because the state coffers were too small for both parties to take possession of them at the same time.

Because of this, the struggles in parliament lost their character of a struggle between principles; they became mere intrigues on the part of careerists who were hustling for office and honours. They did so not in order to receive the opportunity to lead the state in their particular fashion, but in order to exploit it. At the same time, as we have seen above, the electorate descended into a bribeable mass; political struggles became commercial speculations and haggling for business on the part of a gang of characterless adventurers who plundered the state. It seemed as though English parliamentarism was heading towards bankruptcy. But in reality it turned out that parliamentarism is a form whose content can assume various shapes. It was not parliamentarism that was going bankrupt, but merely the landowners' monopoly of rule through parliamentarism.

In an earlier chapter, we already highlighted how towards the end of the previous century, new, aspiring powerful classes emerged alongside the landowners and the financial aristocracy with which the landowners were allied. The interests of these classes stood in the sharpest contradiction to those of the landowners. The formation of a class of industrial capitalists and an industrial proletariat was particularly decisive in this regard. Trade and land ownership had been able to get along, but industry and land ownership were at loggerheads.

The more powerfully that industry developed, the harsher the industrial bourgeoisie found their lack of political rights. The bourgeoisie started a war against the landowners' regime and, in order to increase its strength, the bourgeoisie allied with the other politically disenfranchised classes, the petit-bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The latter was growing strongly, but it still did not

possess sufficient self-confidence for the bourgeoisie to see a danger in drawing it into the political struggle. The outcome of this union was a bourgeois radical party that was decisively hostile to the landowners. The main object of the political battles which were now unfolding was the right to vote. Through the particular form of suffrage at the time, the victorious aristocracy had made parliament into an exclusive representation of its class interests. Only with a new configuration of the franchise would it be possible to turn the representative system into a representation of bourgeois interests. Everything hinged on the right to vote.

The bourgeoisie was victorious in the struggle for the reconfiguration of the suffrage. The proletariat had pulled the bourgeoisie's chestnuts out of the fire; it had borne the burden of the struggle and made the reform movement irresistible. In part it did so in a similar fashion, and with similar means, to our comrades in Belgium recently – but it remained disqualified from voting.

Through the Reform Bill of 1832, 88 of the small boroughs ('rotten boroughs') lost their particular representation in parliament either completely or in part (a few of them sent just one representative instead of two). The bill also created 42 new urban constituencies. In the rural constituencies, the larger tenant farmers now also received the vote alongside the landowners. In order to vote, they needed contracts for at least twenty years and had to pay 50 pounds in rent. By contrast, the right to vote was taken from the small landowners. Whereas until then all landowners who made 40 shillings (two pounds) in ground rent from their property had the right to vote, now (with one minor exception) only those whose ground rent consisted of at least 10 pounds could vote. In the cities, anybody who had their own large dwelling received the right to vote, that is to say those who could pay the house and window tax, as well as the poor rate and at least 10 pounds in rent.

As a result of this reform, the number of voters doubled from 400,000 to 800,000. Voting remained public, the electability census was not abolished,[6] compensation for representatives was not introduced and the cost of the ballot boxes had to – and still has to – be covered by the candidates, who even have to advance a deposit that can on occasion reach 1,000 pounds sterling (2,000 marks) in order to secure the payment. The rural constituencies and a section of the smaller urban constituencies, not all of which were abolished under this electoral law, remained the domains of the large landowners.

But now a section of the urban constituencies sent representatives of industrial interests to parliament. The new suffrage gave parliament a new character. From the means of the class rule of the landed aristocracy, parliament now

6 (Kautsky's footnote): This did not happen until 1858.

became a battlefield on which the landowners and industrial capital fought each other in the most furious manner. The landowners were still very powerful and continued to benefit from the voting system. The bourgeoisie was unable to prevail with its main demand, the demand for free trade, for a long time.

But the bourgeoisie did not restrict itself to the struggle in parliament. Indeed, there is nothing more absurd than when those looking to discredit parliamentarism amongst the fighting proletariat maintain that a party which is represented in parliament and participates in its struggles thereby renounces all other forms of political struggle.

There is nothing more erroneous than such an assertion. Nowhere do the parliamentary parties appeal to the masses outside of parliament as often as in the fatherland of parliamentarianism, nowhere else are the means of exerting pressure on parliament and the government through profound movements amongst the mass of the people so advanced as in England. It is possible to see this again now, where highly conservative parliamentarians in Ulster are preaching rebellion in order to create difficulties for a liberal government.

The Anti-Corn Law League[7] proceeded in a similar fashion. It also turned to the masses. When it suited the League, it called on the masses to rebel and even to conduct a general strike. On the other hand, the landowners sought to win over the workers. Whereas the factory owners promised them cheap bread if the corn tariffs fell, the landowners offered them the ten-hour day. But the landowners and the manufacturers refused with equal obstinacy the main demand of the organised workers: universal suffrage.

The English statesmen were far too aware of the power of parliament to allow the enemies of capitalist society access to it unnecessarily. In 1846 the battle was settled and the Corn Laws fell. The era of free trade began. And owing to a peculiar combination of circumstances, it became the era of an economic boom, the kind of which the world had never seen. England became the sole ruler of the world market. The country's major industry developed with phenomenal speed and its profits were astonishing. The boom was so tremendous that almost all of the nation's classes participated in it. Its costs were borne abroad.

The landowners reconciled themselves with the new state of affairs. Ground rents did not fall, as they feared. On the contrary, they actually increased. At the same time, the landowners themselves started to become joint partners in

7 Founded in 1838 by the Manchester liberals Richard Cobden and John Bright, the League fought against the levies on imported wheat.

industrial enterprises – particularly in the form of joint-stock companies – and thereby obtained an interest in the prospering of industry. Now the same thing that had happened in the second half of the eighteenth century occurred. The antagonism between Liberals and Conservatives ceased to be one of principle, just as it had between the Whigs and the Tories back then. In the decades following 1848, we observed the strange phenomenon of Conservative ministries carrying out the Liberal programmes of their predecessors in a way that often surpassed these forces in terms of their liberalism. The only significant difference between the two parties was no longer to be found in their domestic policy but in their foreign policy, especially regarding relations with Russia. That the two parties remained separate was again mainly due to the fact that the state coffers were too small for all of those who attempted to reach them through parliament.

Parliamentary politics lost any principled character again and struggles in parliament became pure comedies performed by professional politicians and careerists. At first, the electoral reform of 1867 did not change this situation much. The economic boom had not only reconciled the landowners with the capitalist regime but even a section of the workers too. The boom had made it possible for the most energetic and best-situated layers of the workers to win significant improvements to their situation through trade-union struggles. But since, at the same time, profits grew enormously, the capitalists put up with their workers' victories. A labour aristocracy was formed, which believed in the gospel of the harmony between capital and labour. Only one thing disturbed this harmony: the workers' lack of political rights.

Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives had all that much to object to when it came to the labour aristocracy rising up into the ranks of the politically privileged classes. This was the only way of separating the labour aristocracy from the mass of the workers. Thus, following several unsuccessful attempts, the better-off urban workers gained the right to vote in 1867 through a law that made each head of a particular household eligible to vote.

The number of voters almost tripled as a result. This number rose from around a million to three million. Most of these voters could be found in the cities. In 1872 this was followed by a law that introduced the secret ballot.[8] But the lack of remuneration for the deputies remained and still continues to this day, as does the even more restrictive provision that the candidates have to cover the – often highly exorbitant – election costs and must put forward such a sum when they are nominated.

8 A reference to the Ballot Act.

The latter provision did not prevent workers from being elected to parliament. But it did ensure that principally those workers who made it to parliament were those who enjoyed the favour of wealthy 'friends of the workers' who paid their election costs.[9]

The powerfully flourishing trade unions had become hotbeds of a narrow-minded caste mentality and guild exclusivity and thereby had the effect of weakening the general class consciousness of the labour aristocrats. Their political detachment from the mass of the working population and their inclusion amongst the politically privileged classes completely killed class consciousness amongst them. They went from the champions of the worse-off layers of the working classes to their oppressors.

Without class consciousness, without their unification into an independent, united political organisation, these layers of workers – as tightly and comprehensively organised as they were economically – politically formed as much of an incoherent mass as the bourgeois middle classes. Their emergence on the territory of parliamentarism did not change anything of parliament's character. Parliament remained a class representation of the bourgeoisie. This parliamentary inertia was not to last all that long, however. Economic development continued apace and destroyed the foundations of general harmony between capital, profit, ground rent and working wages. Gradually, new industrial nations emerged alongside England that were able to offer an alternative to it on the world market – notably the United States after the Civil War and Germany after the war against France. Competition on the world market became ever more intense; this was complemented by devastating crises and economic stagnation of an extent and duration that were previously unknown. Capital profits started to become scarcer. At the same time, however, ground rent and wages were also falling. From the 1870s, the development of overseas trade brought cheap foreign food to the English market in increasingly large quantities. What the landowners had feared as a consequence of the repeal of the Corn Laws in the 1850s now came about in the 1870s: a constant decline in ground rents, insofar as they flowed from agricultural labour. From then on, there was a re-emergence of the desire for protective tariffs.

But it was not only ground rents that were falling. The lengthy economic stagnations brought down wages too. Even if they did not lead directly to wage reductions, the annual wage of the masses actually fell, because employment

9 (Kautsky's footnote): Thanks to these friends of the workers, the political self-sacrifice of the English workers – as highly developed as it is in their trade-union struggles – has been very downbeat and they must be inoculated with this again. This is one of the obstacles to an independent social-democratic labour movement in England.

became uneven and the number of holidays per year increased. The unions, which had achieved glowing successes between the 1850s and the 1870s, now arrived at the limits of their capability and often proved unable to reduce the pressure on wages and to support the unemployed sufficiently. The conflicts between capital and labour became increasingly numerous and embittered. A new spirit, one hostile to capitalism, began to develop in the old guild unions and alongside them a new workers' movement started to emerge with new demands on state and society.

Under these changed circumstances, the bourgeoisie split into two camps. The one section considered the working class to be the more dangerous enemy and, due to its fear of the proletariat, allied itself even more closely with the landowners. When it came to industry, this section of the bourgeoisie had nothing to fear from the landowners. The more insightful members of the English landowners know too well that today England's existence depends primarily on the blossoming of its industry, not its agriculture. And, generally speaking, the large landowners are personally interested in the development of industry, that is to say, in the profits of capital. The Conservative Party – in the 1830s and 1840s still a pure landowner party that played the workers off against the factory owners – had in the 1860s become one of two capitalist parties which flirted with the labour aristocracy just as much as its rival, the Liberals. From the 1870s on, it increasingly became the party of the propertied in general and of opposition to the working class. Here and there it allowed some of its individual members to be friendly to the workers in a demagogic fashion, but it decisively opposed any practical step in the interests of the working class.

Another section of the bourgeoisie, namely that section which had retained the radical traditions from the time of the struggle for the first electoral reform, in which the landowners were considered to be the main enemy of the bourgeoisie and against whom capitalists, petit-bourgeoisie and workers had to stand closely together – this section feared the working masses just as much as the other section that had become 'conservative'. But this bourgeoisie, the 'radicals', resigned themselves to the idea that the consolidation of the propertied into a 'reactionary mass' was the best way of conjuring up the very fate that they wanted to banish. The workers were thus literally forced to break from the propertied classes and to establish a separate party in opposition to them. This party would soon prove to be irresistible. The only way to ensure that the working class remained subservient to bourgeois interests was if the bourgeoisie placed itself at the head of the struggle for better living conditions and granted the workers concessions – concessions which would in the first instance come at the landowners' expense, the class against which the capitalists and proletarians have a common interest. The Liberal Party now became what the

Conservatives had been in the 1830s and 1840s: the party of friends of the workers and philanthropists. The roles were reversed. Thus, under the influence of economic development, two new parties formed within the framework, and in the name, of the old parties. Parliament once again ceased to be merely a stage for the intrigues of careerists and comedians. It began to form the stage of serious struggles, of class struggles and of clashes between fundamentally different parties.

The first important outcome of these party developments was the electoral reform, which became law in 1884 and 1885. In order to break the influence of the landowners in the rural constituencies, the Liberal Party granted rural workers the right to vote through this reform. Household suffrage, which until then had only applied to the urban constituencies, was now extended to the rural constituencies, the counties.

Even now suffrage is far from universal. Tenants or owners of a dwelling (the income value of which must be at least 200 marks per year) were only allowed to vote if they occupied the property for at least a year; the tenants were not automatically placed on the electoral list, they had to register for it. On the other hand, the wealthy had a right to several votes because it was possible for them to vote in any constituency in which they own a property, or wherever they fulfil the necessary conditions of suffrage in another way. So a merchant who has an office in the City of London and a house in the suburbs presides over two votes. If, alongside this, he owns a mine with a residential building in Wales as well as a villa on the coast, then he is entitled to four votes. And at the same time, the elections in the different constituencies take place on different days, making it possible for him to cast his various votes.

Despite this plural suffrage, the number of those eligible to vote in Great Britain and Ireland as a proportion of the population is lower than in Germany. In 1907, 22 percent were eligible to vote for the German Reichstag, whereas in 1906 only a little more than 16 percent were eligible to vote for the English Lower House. Initially, of course, this electoral law was a step forward. Until 1884 only 10 percent had the right to vote. By expanding the suffrage, the Liberals hoped to secure their rule for a long time to come. However, they did not take crucial factors into account. Their expectation would have been correct if their supporters in the bourgeois circles had remained the same. But they were not able to make a single concession to the working class that did not alienate a host of bourgeois elements. But the disappearance of their bourgeois support made them even more dependent on the workers. They had to make further concessions to them in order to increase, or at least hang onto, their support in workers' circles.

While the Conservatives were becoming the party of the propertied, the Liberal Party was pushing towards a situation in which they eventually only found support in the working class and the 'new middle class', the white-collar workers and the intellectuals.

But the friendliness towards the workers on the part of the English bourgeoisie could no longer be restricted to social reform at the landowners' expense. Economic development stirred the masses of the layers of workers beneath the labour aristocracy and the electoral reform of 1885 granted large sections of these masses the right to vote. They became a political factor. However, these layers were not yet completely infected by bourgeois radicalism; their social position and the historical situation made them much more open to modern socialism than the labour aristocracy, which – incidentally – lost its aversion to socialism in the same proportion that it gradually crumbled.

These layers are hostile to capitalist society as a whole. And they demand a direct improvement in their social position, a direct improvement in their working conditions. In the beginning of the 1880s, the English workers still placed their main emphasis on land reform.

Henry George[10] was the hero of the hour. Today the eight-hour day is the workers' slogan and the mass of the Liberal party, which until recently fought against this demand bitterly, now feels compelled to drop its resistance. In fact, the Liberal Party has already become the prisoner of the proletariat, thanks to the latter's organisation and the strength it draws from the right to vote. Today already, the Liberals, much to their annoyance, feel compelled to make concessions to the workers at the expense of the industrial capitalists – no longer at the cost of the landowners.

It is obvious where this development will lead: within a short time period the Liberal Party will be driven to a point where it must decide whether it wants to continue to be a bourgeois party or to become a pure workers' party. If it decides on the former, if it breaks with the workers, then this will seal its demise, because its support in bourgeois circles is rapidly diminishing and is far too weak to sustain it as a party. Behind it, however, an independent workers' party is rising. This party will draw new sustenance every time the Liberals dither when it comes to the proletariat. The independent workers' party will also take the Liberals' place at the moment when the latter say to the workers: up to here and no further.

If the Liberals do not find the courage to break with the workers, if they continue on the path of making concessions to the workers, then it is possible that

10 Henry George (1839–97) was an American economist who championed a land-value tax as the best way of tackling social inequality and poverty.

they could prevent the formation of a social-democratic workers' party. But the Liberals would only succeed in doing this if they themselves developed into a social-democratic party: all the elements that have an interest in capitalist exploitation would then disappear from the party and the only remaining bourgeois components of their party would be the defectors who had broken with the capitalist mode of production.

Of course, it is not all that possible that developments in England will take this course, despite the fact that the English cling to old forms and like to pour old wine into new bottles.

But be that as it may. Here we merely wish to show, on the basis of the development of party relationships in England, how incorrect it is to claim that parliamentarism exclusively serves the capitalist class. We have seen how, depending on the level of economic development and the nature of the suffrage, the representative system has served the most diverse class interests and assumed the most diverse character forms.

After having been a tool of the dictatorship of the aristocracy for over 150 years, for half a century it became a tool of the dictatorship of the industrial capitalists. But this class has already lost its sole rule. The proletariat is already capable of influencing domestic politics in its favour in and through parliament, and, with giant steps, the day is approaching when the almighty English parliament will be a tool of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

CHAPTER 12

Parliamentarism and the Working Classes

When we maintain that parliamentarism and parliamentarism are two things and that the form of parliamentarism is a weapon that can serve – and has served – the most varied parties and classes, we do not actually want to say that the essence of parliamentarism favours certain layers of the population and puts others at a disadvantage.

We have seen that a parliament must fulfil functions which are not that straightforward. The office of a parliamentarian necessitates specific knowledge and skills, as does every position in the modern division of labour; it requires eloquence and broad horizons – an ability to understand relations of general significance nationally and internationally. Finally, it requires a certain degree of legal, economic and historical education – at least for those parliamentarians who want to be more than just voting fodder.

Parliamentarians are therefore primarily recruited from those classes whose occupations entail the achievement of the above-mentioned preconditions, such as lawyers, professors, journalists, officials and so on – or from those classes who have enough leisure time at their disposal for their members, if they so wish, to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, such as large capitalists, large land owners and the like. In this respect, the view that parliamentarism is only a representation of the bourgeoisie – in the broadest sense of the term – thus had a certain justification.

It had a certain justification back when Rittinghausen was developing his ideas on direct legislation by the people. It no longer has this justification. For between then and now there was the period of the most tremendous upsurge of the proletariat.

As with the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, the preconditions for parliamentarians to emerge from amongst the ranks of the proletariat were absent. But this changed in the course of the labour movement.

We have seen how the individual village communities and the small towns became isolated from each other by economic relations. Each formed a community in itself. To a large extent, this isolation continues to this day. The development of the capitalist mode of production and the capitalist state, militarism, state taxes, railways and newspapers have indeed awakened a national consciousness and an interest in state affairs in the countryside and in the small towns. But nonetheless, local considerations are still predominant in the public life of the rural communities and small towns; only during particularly exciting

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developments such as general elections, the outbreak of a war and the like does a more lively political life develop, a merger into parties or a connection to one or other of the large state parties.

But aside from such moments, it is rare that this leads to permanent practical participation in politics or constant activity in continuous political organisations. In quiet times, politics in the village and the small town is restricted to pot casters in the pub.

Things are better when it comes to the petty bourgeoisie in the cities. They are in the flux of great political struggles. They cannot escape the influence of these struggles and are driven to participate in state politics constantly. However, they too find it difficult to join together in lasting political organisations. For they too are isolated from each other as a result of their work. Each works for himself on his own in a dwarf enterprise. But not only do they work with each other, they also work against each other; competition forces each of them to advance at the cost of his comrades. And everywhere, both in the town and in the country, there are limitless variations of property and income between them; the wealthier petty bourgeois looks down with contempt on the one in a worse situation and the latter looks up enviously at the former. All this provides significant difficulties when it comes to the unification of the entire petty bourgeoisie or the peasantry into a united, large organisation. It is not easy for these classes to go beyond guild associations or local associations that serve their momentary interests.

By contrast, industry drives the wage workers into a few centres in their hundreds of thousands, where they work with each other in the same conditions. The vast majority of them cannot improve their situation at the expense of their comrades, but only in association with them. While the working conditions of the peasants and craftsmen work against their organisation, those of the waged workers virtually drive them towards joining together in large masses. Thus there is the contradiction, to which we have already alluded in this pamphlet, between the disjointedness of the peasants and the petty bourgeois, which is difficult to overcome, and the sense of solidarity and discipline of the waged workers.

However, activity in these organisations necessarily creates the qualities required by a parliamentarian: eloquence, broad horizons, an understanding of organisational and administrative matters and legal training. The workers active in their organisations must thank the authorities for this latter quality, who everywhere view the merger of workers with hostility and who deploy everything in their power within the law – and often outside of it too – in order to hinder and to suppress the workers' organisations. Here it becomes most clearly evident to the workers that a law not only revolves around its principles

but also its wording; here they learn all the tricks of jurisprudence; there they will be driven to study the laws and their spirit, as well as to exploit every little right that these laws contain for them and to reject any notion of illegality that the law would wish to inflict upon them.

But the class position of the proletarian not only allows him to arrive at parliamentary capabilities more easily than the petty bourgeois, or the peasant in particular, it also makes it easier for him to acquire a general political education. The peasant is bound to the soil. He is unaware of the world beyond his immediate surroundings. The wage worker is detached from the soil; he wanders, becomes acquainted with foreign countries and even if he stays at home then he works together with foreigners.

This alone expands his horizons, frees him from many prejudices and teaches him important skills. But there is another factor of greater importance.

The craftsman and the peasant are not merely workers, but also merchants. When they clock off work, they are not yet free men: their business keeps them even then; they must use the little bit of brain energy that is left after work for careful calculations and considerations – and the worse things are for them, the more they must do so.

The wage worker – especially the male wage worker – is a free man after he has done his work, his thought can turn to the world as a whole. And the more he has understood the solidarity with his comrades, the more he realises that he is unable to improve his situation as an individual, the easier it is for him to take a lively interest in questions that concern his class as a whole and its position in society.

It is a fact recognised even by bourgeois writers that general political, but especially economic education, in worker circles is much more widespread not only than in peasant and petty bourgeois circles, but also in bourgeois circles. Through these educational circles, the labour movement trains orators and politicians who are quite capable of outperforming the bourgeois parliamentarians and of bringing to bear not only the interests of the workers but also the general interests of social development as a whole. The fighting proletariat stepped into the ranks of those classes from which the parliamentarians are recruited.

Wherever there is a developed labour movement and universal suffrage, practical participation in parliamentary work ceases to be a monopoly of the propertied classes.

But not only does the fighting proletariat produce parliamentarians. It also knows how to keep them under its control. And that is even more important than the first point. Nothing is more erroneous than the view that the interests of certain layers of the population can only be represented in par-

liament by representatives of those same layers, and that this kind of representation ensures the best guarantee of the interests at hand. Many a politician from a bourgeois background can be counted among the best pioneers of the working class; and many a worker has betrayed his class. A class can only be sure that in parliament its interests are being constantly protected in the most decisive and, at any given moment in time, most appropriate manner if it is not content to elect those representatives to parliament but also monitors and influences their parliamentary activity constantly.

The petty bourgeois and small peasants do not find it easy to do this. Wherever they form the mass of voters, they are therefore mainly deceived – and the more powerful parliament is, the more that they will be deceived. Despite what all the Manchester men say, the contemporary state is an enormous economic operation and the state's influence on economic life as a whole is already today immense. In a centralised state ruled through parliament the whole of this economic power, decisions not only regarding class interests, but also directly regarding thousands of private interests, lies to a great extent in the hands of the parliamentarians. The temptations that exist when making these decisions and the small number of people who are able to resist them is clearly evident in a society where 'enrich yourselves' is the general watchword and where wealth makes it possible for somebody to forget any calumny.[1]

But even when this personal corruption did not set in, in general the peasants and petty bourgeois were hitherto betrayed by their representatives. Because they are unable to form particular united parties, these classes have always lent on one or other fraction of the propertied classes, the capitalists or the landlords. Not only did they draw their representatives from these latter classes and the clergy, they also set them the task of protecting the interests of the propertied, both small and large, simultaneously.

This was, of course, impossible and with the emerging conflict between the interests on both sides, the deputies who had origins in the wealthy classes and who were under the constant influence of those classes decided this conflict in favour of the wealthy classes.

Finally, it should be considered that the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie are declining classes, whose class interests often contrast with social develop-

1 (Kautsky's footnote): Absolutist opponents of parliamentarism like to point to the corruption that parliament brings with it. They forget that abolishing parliamentarism will not eliminate capitalism's corrupting influence on the state. The focal point of corruption would then simply move from parliament to the bureaucracy, and it will proliferate all the more happily there, because – unless the whole system collapses – the bureaucracy is protected from exposure in a quite different way to parliament. Cf. Russia and Turkey.

ment in general. Precisely from the standpoint of the propertied classes, in many cases the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie arrive at demands which prove to be unrealisable.

The parliamentarians who are elected by the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie as representatives of their class interests, but who represent the standpoint of the propertied classes, can therefore achieve almost nothing for their voters, even if they are able to preserve their personal integrity and loyalty to political principle.

This is also true of the wage workers, wherever they have not yet been able to form a specific political party. But, sooner or later, the class struggle will lead to the formation of such a party everywhere.

Just as the proletariat's working conditions drive them to unite in powerful economic organisations according to their occupation, so they are eventually driven to overcome the barriers of their profession and to create a political organisation that will encompass the entire class in the state as a whole. And just as the formation of an independent political party is necessarily rooted in conditions, it is just as necessary that it will sooner or later assume a revolutionary character – where it does not already have such a character from the outset – in other words, that it will become social democracy.

This same unity, this same discipline, this same 'tyranny', which marks out the workers' economic organisations, is also characteristic of the workers' parties. And this discipline does not only apply to the masses, but also to those who represent the organisation in public, the leaders. Whatever the particular position of the worker may be, none of these leaders can undertake a political action against the will of his comrades, or even without their consent. As such, the socialist parliamentary deputy is not – as blasphemous as this may sound – a free man, but merely the representative of his party. If his views stand opposed to those of the party then he must cease to be its representative.

Rittinghausen and Bucher both deplore the fact that the contemporary parliamentarian is no longer the mandated representative in the sense that a member of the estate assemblies was at the end of the Middle Ages.

It is impossible to restore the bound mandates in the old manner that they existed. Doing so would be contrary to the essence of the modern state, which would be dissolved into a mere association of more-or-less sovereign smaller municipalities (constituencies).

The contemporary parliamentarian is a mandatary in a different sense; he is not the mandated representative of his constituency, but – even if not in legal terms – actually the mandated representative of his party. But in no other party is he a mandatary of that party to such an extent as when that party is social democracy. And while, in the bourgeois parties, party discipline is in reality

the discipline of small cliques who stand above the disjointed mass of voters, in social democracy it is the discipline of an organisation which encompasses the entire mass of the fighting, intelligent proletariat and which is increasingly expanding across the working classes.

The socialist deputy thus becomes what the elected rural deputy was a few centuries ago, a mandatary of the people; not the mandatary of a small community, but of a party that extends over the entire area of the state and that strives to encompass the entire working population within that state. Wherever the proletariat organises itself into a specific, conscious party that participates in the struggles in and for parliament, it ceases to count among the classes which must expect to be betrayed and cheated by their representatives in parliament when it comes to all important affairs. As with the press, there is a bulwark against corruption in the organisation and discipline of the fighting proletariat. There is no other party that has its deputies in its hand to such an extent that it can count on them as much as the social-democratic party.

But the opponent of parliamentarism might object that, while this may all be true, in one point the proletariat will always be at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the propertied classes: by virtue of its economic dependence, it will never be able to arrive at a position in contemporary society where it can freely choose its representatives. At every election, thousands upon thousands of people are driven, by the most various means of influencing, bribery, intimidation, direct force and so on, to vote not for the best representative of their interests, but even to cast their vote for their enemy. Thus, in the capitalist mode of production, the opponents of parliamentarism object, it is nonsense to expect any significant outcome from the proletariat's participation in parliamentary elections.[2]

Of course, we do not wish to deny that the economic dependence of the workers restricts them in their electoral struggles and makes it impossible for them to deploy their full strength. But we emphatically deny that this disadvantage merely inheres to election campaigns. Whichever path the proletariat

2 (Kautsky's footnote): The longer that parliamentarism endures in any given country, wrote Rittinghausen as late as 1869, the more it will 'bring growing dejectedness and calculating caution into the ranks of the democrats'. 'Under the rule of one and the same election law, each new legislative assembly must be worse than the previous one'. 'The individual worker knows that his vote for this or that candidate, or even the election of that candidate, has hardly any influence on the strength of the people's party in the assembly; he also knows that the disadvantages which – thanks to the political police and the witch-hunting of his employer or the church – can occur for him personally as a result of his vote are in no way proportionate to the advantages that can be achieved by a good vote for his party in his district. He therefore abstains from voting, particularly in the small towns, where the authorities closely watch over all, know everybody and know that they can keep them in check' (Rittinghausen 1869, p. 23).

may take in order to improve its positions and to achieve greater power in society, capital and the state will confront it on that path and deploy everything within its superior power in order to inhibit the progress of the proletariat.

Do Rittinghausen's supporters believe that a referendum on a draft law can be influenced less than an election? Or, to take a completely non-political activity of the working class, is the development of the trade-union movement not hindered at every step by reprimands, blacklists and so on? Were the objection to parliament justified, then this would mean a death sentence for the workers' movement as such – or at least for any of its effective forms. But we cannot say that during elections to a representative body the workers are subjected to greater pressure than in their other activities in the class struggle. On the contrary. At least when it comes to the decisive act in the electoral campaign, the casting of the vote, it is possible for the pressure to be as good as eliminated by the secret ballot. This exists in almost all parliamentary countries, albeit not in a completely effective form in some.

The secret ballot makes the worker more independent during the election than in any other form of the class struggle. Even in Germany, where the electoral process is much less effective in guaranteeing the secrecy of the vote than, for instance, in England, many who would not dare to join a trade union or even to subscribe to a social-democratic publication are able to vote for a social democrat.[3]

In short, from whichever angle we consider the representative system, we cannot find that it disadvantages the proletariat in a way that would give it occasion to stay away from parliament, which is the focal point of our political life and must necessarily be so in contemporary society. For today the bourgeoisie is certainly no longer of the view of Rittinghausen and his disciples that the representative system in and of itself, in every form – even the democratic form – secures its rule.

Back when Rittinghausen was developing his idea of direct legislation, and even later, when Bismarck went along with universal suffrage (during the founding of the North German Confederation in 1867), the bourgeoisie could still think that universal suffrage was harmless.

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3 (Kautsky's footnote): A sign of Bucher's incomprehension of the proletarian aspect of parliamentarism can be seen in his disdain for the secret vote: 'The voters who only want to vote in secret for their candidate thereby let that candidate know that they are sending him into a struggle but that they cannot support him in that struggle' (Bucher 1881, p. 110). He forgets that, as individuals, the proletarians are nothing, but that united they are everything. The proletarian goes to the ballot box as an individual, but behind the representatives of the proletariat there is not a heap of disjointed individuals, but a well-organised, compact mass.

The only modern European large state that had experience with universal suffrage at that point was France, and this experience was highly reassuring to the bourgeoisie. It is easy to explain why this was the case if we consider that the vast majority of the French electorate was made up of peasants. The workers were fragmented, subdued and dejected following the battle of June. A section of them despised the right to vote because, entangled in Jacobin traditions, they believed that it was much easier to attain political power through revolutionary street actions than through the ballot box, and because it believed that the use of the one excluded or actually impaired the other.

Another section rejected the political struggle altogether and wanted to dismantle the old society by purely economic means. By far the largest section of the workers who adhered to universal suffrage found themselves in the wake of the bourgeois democracy. In France, there was no specific workers' party which could have used the right to vote consciously and systematically as a weapon in the proletariat's struggle for emancipation. Accordingly, the right to vote was unable to develop into something that would transform the character of parliamentarism.[4]

But neither was Bonapartist *faux* parliamentarism able to interest the workers particularly. Compared with the legislative body of the French Empire, especially the First Empire, even the competences of the German Reichstag looked respectable.[5]

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4 (Kautsky's footnote): In France, the defeat of the Commune in Paris put an end to any labour movement at all for a long time. In that country there has only been an organised social-democratic workers' party, like the German party, since the Marseilles Congress of 1879. The Havre Congress of 1880 then adopted the minimum programme that Marx and Engels had drawn up in collaboration with Guesde and Lafargue. The programme declares that the transformation of laws 'must be pursued by all the means the proletariat has at its disposal including universal suffrage which will thus be transformed from the instrument of deception that it has been until now into an instrument of emancipation' (Marx and Guesde 1880). But splits and internal struggles, which are associated with the development of every young organisation, and of which German social democracy was not spared in the first decade of its existence either, prevented the rise of French social democracy to such an extent that it was unable to run an election campaign with some success until 1889. Only from that point onwards was it possible for the participation of the independent fighting proletariat to begin to influence the character of parliament in the country that, with a few interruptions, had possessed universal suffrage since 1848.

5 (Kautsky's footnote): 'The legislative body had no right either to elect its presidents or to make initiatives for legislation. Nor did it have the power to receive petitions, nor the possibility of interpellating the government. It was only allowed to discuss the laws which came to it through the State Council. And if, after this, an individual member found it desirable to make amendments to the laws, he also needed the approval of the State Council before negotiations on the laws could take place. In the constitution there was no mention at all of the chamber's

In 1867, therefore, the Second Empire's experience with universal suffrage did not need to deter either Bismarck or Disraeli from expanding the franchise. Even in 1869, the French experience made Liebknecht suspicious of what he called 'parliamentary experiments'.

But since then, the consequences of universal suffrage in various countries are precisely what has served to chasten the ruling classes. In England it has already made one of the two large parties, which until then took turns in ruling the country, completely dependent on the workers. In spite of its imperfections in Germany – poor protection of secrecy during elections, a high age limit on the right to vote and in particular the failure to re-divide the electoral constituencies, as a result of which the rapidly growing revolutionary cities are at a disadvantage *vis-à-vis* the backward, depopulated countryside – in spite of all these shortcomings, the universal suffrage that exists has made German social democracy the most powerful party in the country as far as the number of votes it receives is concerned, and it is only a matter of time before – even with the current configuration of the constituencies – it will also be the strongest party in the Reichstag in terms of parliamentary deputies. In fact, the hopes of the bourgeoisie in Germany no longer rest on parliamentarism. It no longer believes that this system can secure its rule under all circumstances; its hopes rest on the weakness of German parliamentarism, on the Reichstag being inhibited by particularism. In Prussia, this means the rule of the three-class suffrage system. Its hopes also rest on the fact that in Germany absolutism and militarism actually prevail.

Today no bourgeois government can grant universal and equal suffrage with a light heart. Any expansion of the suffrage must be fought by the bourgeoisie and it is only due to the bourgeoisie's fear of the proletariat that the right to vote has not been abolished in countries where it already exists. For if today the bourgeoisie has realised the dangers that are attached to universal suffrage, then everywhere today the proletariat knows what a powerful weapon it is. Were Rittinghausen and his friends correct, then it would be madness on the part of the proletariat even to raise a finger for universal suffrage, that is to say, for the right to participate in parliament.

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right to authorise the budget. Not until the decree of 22 March 1852 was it determined that the chamber should have the power of authorising the budget by chapter. This right could, as was previously the case, be taken from it or maimed. The fact that it was not possible for a report for the proceedings of a body composed in this way to be published, but merely an official protocol, could almost be called a blessing; but, of course, this also ensured that the last hope of drawing the opposition into the chamber, the hope of the effectiveness of energetic words spoken from the tribune, was cut off' (Bulle 1890, p. 20).

Instead, wherever the proletariat does not yet possess universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage, it enters into the most energetic struggle for it, as in Prussia. Wherever it is deprived of suffrage, the proletariat does not shy away from the most extreme efforts and sacrifices in order to achieve it.

And any attempt to take or restrict the German workers' right to vote for representatives in the Reichstag would create the danger of a terrible catastrophe for the country. Today, only somebody who is politically blind can claim that the representative system ensures the rule of the bourgeoisie – even where there is universal suffrage – and that in order to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie, first of all the representative system must be eliminated. Now already, it is beginning to become apparent that a real parliamentary regime can be just as well an instrument for the dictatorship of the proletariat as it is an instrument for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

One of the most important tasks of the working class in its struggle for the achievement of political power is not to eliminate the representative system, but to break the power of government *vis-à-vis* the parliament, and at the same time to pave the broadest possible path for the proletariat to parliament through the equality of suffrage, protecting the secret ballot, short parliamentary terms, complete freedom of the press, meetings and associations, but especially through the expansion of the franchise to all state citizens aged twenty or above.

At best, ideas of direct legislation by the people in Rittinghausen's understanding would have the most crippling and confusing effects. Wherever democracy is already firmly established, Rittinghausen's ideas are a harmless hobby horse; however, the propagation of those ideas must be rejected wherever the proletariat is fighting for admission to parliament or wherever it has to fight for the rights of parliament *vis-à-vis* an all-powerful government.

CHAPTER 13

Direct Legislation by the People and the Class Struggle

We believe we have demonstrated that in a modern state the focus of political activity necessarily lies in its parliament. We believe we have also demonstrated that this fact is no tragedy for the proletariat, because through its class struggles it develops a range of abilities which enable it to render parliament subservient to its aims.

Direct legislation by the people can only be considered in the manner in which it already exists in Switzerland – that is to say, in the sense it is also demanded by the Erfurt programme: not as a means of eliminating the representative system, but merely of making this system more democratic and of subjecting it to the control of the population.

Direct legislation by the people in this sense – the referendum and the initiative – which should, however, more fittingly be called the direct participation of the people in the legislative process, naturally plays a more modest role in politics than, for instance, suffrage. This is because direct legislation leaves the focus of political activity to parliament. Yet suffrage, which determines the composition of parliament and thereby its activity, is of much greater significance than the right to monitor parliament or to encourage it to pass certain laws – both of which can only assert themselves here and there and which are anyway implemented by the same people who have already made their will known in the act of voting.

The only question left for us to examine is the importance that direct legislation by the people in this modest sense can acquire for the proletarian class struggle. The radical democracy of the old school could only view direct legislation (in what follows, we will use the word solely in the narrow sense outlined above) as a highly advantageous arrangement. After all, for this trend of thought only 'the people' come into consideration; and it is supposed that direct legislation by the people increases the power of those people.

For the social democrats, the matter is not so simple. The democracy was the child of a situation in which it was necessary to combine all classes of the population against the aristocratic-absolutist regime. The democracy was only able to solve this problem by ignoring the class antagonisms amongst the mass of the people.

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Social democracy was formed when the aristocratic-absolutist regime was broken. It emerged out of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie – a contradiction that is now by necessity manifesting itself. If the historical task of the democracy was to mask the class antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, then the particular task of social democracy is to unveil this antagonism and to bring it most sharply to the consciousness of the proletariat.

Social democracy is the representative of the interests of the proletariat – but the proletariat is not synonymous with 'the people'. This is not because social democracy can only represent proletarian interests exclusively. Its historical task points it towards promoting the development of society in all the areas in which it is able to intervene, and to lead the cause of all the exploited and oppressed. It is also to be expected that, wherever social democracy has become a powerful party, the petty bourgeoisie and peasants will join it *en masse*. This is because these classes are incapable of forming their own political parties. They can only choose between joining one of the parties of the propertied or joining the party of the propertyless. And, the more they are oppressed by capitalist exploitation, the more they feel that they are propertyless, the more they will be inclined to join the party of the propertyless.

It can even come to pass that social democracy wins the majority of people, even in countries where waged workers do not form the majority. But today this is still far away. And, however close we may get to it, the proletariat will always form the backbone of the party; its characteristics will determine the party's character, its strength the party's power. Bourgeois and peasants are most welcome to join us and to march alongside us, but the proletariat will always show the way.

Yet if the mass from which social democracy draws its recruits not only consists of the wage workers, but also the peasants and the petty bourgeois – craftsmen, middlemen, small officials and so on (in short the so-called 'common people') – then these classes, with the exception of the class-conscious wage workers, also form areas of recruitment for our enemies. The main root of our enemies' political power lay, and still lies today, in their influence on these classes.

Granting the people political rights thus by no means leads to safeguarding the interests of the proletariat or those of social development. It is well known that universal suffrage has not yet delivered a social democratic majority anywhere. On occasion, it can provide more backward majorities than would be the case under the same circumstances with a census vote.[1] It can get rid of a

1 That is to say, an election in which the votes of the propertied are worth more than those of the propertyless.

liberal regime in order to put a conservative or Ultramontanist[2] one in its place. In these cases, the liberals declare that the people are not yet 'ready' for freedom.

Nevertheless, the proletariat must under all circumstances demand democratic institutions for the same reason that it – once having gained political power – can only use its class rule to put an end to all class rule. It is the lowest of the social strata. It cannot attain political rights, at least not for the class as a whole, without everyone attaining them. All other classes can potentially become a privileged class, but not the proletariat. Social democracy, the party of the class-conscious proletariat, is thus the strongest buttress of democratic aspirations – much stronger than the democracy itself.

But, while it is the most resolute champion of the aspirations of the democracy, it must not share its illusions. It must remain conscious that every popular right it wins becomes a weapon not only for social democracy itself, but also for its enemies. It must in certain circumstances be prepared for the fact that democratic achievements initially may be of more use to these enemies than to social democracy itself – but only initially, because eventually, of course, the introduction of democratic institutions in the state must turn out in favour of social democracy, must facilitate the struggle of social democracy and lead it to victory. The fighting proletariat has so much confidence in the development of society, so much confidence in itself, that it fears no fight – not even against a superior force. It merely demands a battlefield on which it can move freely. This battlefield is the democratic state; it is where the last decisive struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat will be fought out.

If social democracy does not share the illusions of the democracy, then it also differs from it in the value it places on the individual democratic institutions. In assessing these institutions, social democracy does not merely ask whether they increase the power of the people in general, but also whether, and to what extent, they influence the strength and development of the proletariat in particular. From this point of view, social democracy places particular emphasis on certain democratic demands, which the bourgeois democracy does not at all emphasise – and *vice versa*. Freedom of association, for example, is a living condition for the proletariat, but not for the petty bourgeois and the peasants – and least of all for the capitalists, for whom it is most inconvenient. Thus the bourgeois democracy never fought for this demand with particular zeal; the French Revolution even ushered in a direct ban on all associations. By con-

2 That is to say, a pro-Vatican administration.

trast, the right to freedom of association is one of the emerging proletariat's first demands.

In dealing with the question of the referendum and the initiative, we can thus not be content with the assurance that they increase the power of the people. We must ask, how do they influence the proletariat's strength and process of development? The answer to this question primarily hinges on the value we attribute to direct legislation by the people.

We have shown that the modern representative system is not particularly favourable to the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie – particularly those in the rural towns. The classes that are most likely to come into their own in the representative system are: those who preside over great wealth – whether in capital or land; the intellectuals; and – under a democratic system – the fighting and class-conscious part of the industrial proletariat. In general one can thus say, the parliamentary system favours the population of the cities *vis-à-vis* the rural population. All the above-mentioned strata of the people who live in the country – even the large landowners, for example – are related to the city in manifold ways and receive their ideas from there.

But, in turn, of the large cities, it is the capital city that has a particular influence on the parliament. In an earlier chapter, we pointed out that the centralising tendencies of the modern mode of production make it possible for the city population to influence the government to a greater extent than the remainder of the population. This is because the government is necessarily based in the economic and political centre of the country, the capital city. But in a parliamentary country it is equally necessary that parliament is also based in the capital. The Medieval legislative assemblies, sessions of the court and the estates were not tied to any particular location – nor was the government. By contrast, in our century all attempts on the part of reactionary governments to deprive parliament of the influence of the city and to relegate it to a small country town have been short-lived experiments. Despite its fear of revolutionary Paris, the French reactionary chamber of 1871 had to remain close to the Parisian canons, in Versailles.

The capital city's influence on parliament assumes the most varied forms. In revolutionary periods it can even come to pass that the population of the capital city directly dictates its will to the chamber and that this chamber is the mere tool of the capital's population. But even in the most peaceful times it is hardly possible for a deputy to escape entirely from the impact of the capital. The moral naïvety of the rural deputies might often suffer badly as a result, but their political horizons will certainly be expanded.

Direct legislation by the people counteracts these tendencies within parliamentarism. Since parliamentarism strives to place the political focus in the

population of the large cities, this means that this political focus is to be found amongst the mass of the population. With the exception of England, however, even today this mass lives in the rural districts and towns. Direct legislation takes the city population's particular political influence and subjects it to the rural population.

Earlier in the pamphlet, we saw how peasant production isolates people. The capitalist mode of production and the modern state, however, work powerfully towards abolishing the rural seclusion of the peasants – through tax demands, military service, railways, newspapers and suchlike. But, as a rule, the increase in the points of contact between urban and rural areas merely causes the peasant to experience his desolation and loneliness as something painful. This process does not raise his status as a peasant, but awakens in him the desire for the city and drives all energetic and independent-minded elements from the country into the cities, robbing the former of its best forces. Thus the rise of modern commercial life tends to promote the desolation and loneliness of the countryside rather than rectify it.

The fact is that in any modern state the rural population is the most backward economically and politically. This is not to reproach them – it is their misfortune – but it is a fact to which we must be alert. Wherever and however long this situation exists, we have little reason to put our shoulder to the wheel for direct legislation.

Switzerland has perhaps the most progressive rural population in Europe. Its good school system, its often longstanding democratic habits and its dispersal of a large section of capitalist industry across the countryside – among which we can also include the 'flat' land of the deeply cut valleys – make the Swiss peasant intellectually lively and broaden his horizons. On the other hand, the Swiss wage worker is generally more conservative than most of his comrades in Europe. That which raises the peasant holds the worker back – namely the dispersal of capitalist industry across the countryside. The Swiss worker is often very close to the peasant economically too, calling a little piece of land his own. In addition, Switzerland lacks a leading capital city. The contradiction between town and country is much less developed there than it is in a modern large state. And many politicians in Switzerland argue that referenda have a conservative effect.[3]

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3 (Kautsky's footnote): In their works on direct legislation, both Curti and Deploige provide a number of examples for this. The following facts strike me as noteworthy: in 1872, the Swiss Confederation's Federal Assembly, that is to say, a parliament, drew up a draft constitution which contained an extension of popular rights and incorporated the option of a referendum and an initiative into the proposed constitution. On 12 May 1872 this draft constitution

The referendum has yet another adverse effect for the revolutionary proletariat. We have seen that the parliamentary system necessarily requires large, national and self-contained parties. Only through their fusion into such parties can the individual classes come into their own in the parliamentary state. During elections, all of those with the right to vote are drawn into party struggles in the liveliest possible manner. The candidates appear before the voters not as individuals, but as representatives of specific parties who present their programmes to the population and ask them to decide.

In times of a decaying parliamentarism – that is to say, when in parliament there are only parties standing opposite each other that are not separated by any fundamental contradictions, when these parties do not conduct their struggles in order to assert their principled demands, but merely in order to get access to the state coffers – then, of course, all the petty differences which the candidates dig up in order to differentiate themselves from other parties are mere humbug: the election campaign leads not to the enlightenment of the electorate, but to its deception.

But things are quite different wherever great antagonistic interests stand before each other – thus in our period especially when social democracy inter-

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was put to a popular vote and rejected – with 261,072 votes against and 255,609 in favour. As a result, a new draft was then developed by a new Federal Assembly, which also included the referendum but no longer contained the initiative. This draft was adopted in 1874 with 340,199 votes in favour and 198,013 against. The parliamentarians had been more democratic than the people.

Deploige describes how it is the Conservatives who most prefer to call a referendum as a way of slowing down the progress of the legislative process:

'Mr. Chatelanat, former director of the Statistical Bureau in Bern, made a table of the cantons according to their more or less pronounced tendency to demand a referendum. The Catholic (arch conservative) cantons are at the top of the table: Freiburg first, then Uri, Valais and Obwalden; these are followed by Geneva and Vaud. By contrast, the radical cantons of Thurgau, Solothurn, Glarus and Zurich received the fewest signatures. Mr. Chatenalat's statistics are only based on the experience of five years, but according to the figures I have received, they also apply to the following years' (Deploige and van den Heuvel 1892, p. 102).

During the French Revolution, the Girondins considered the referendum a means of breaking the superiority of the revolutionary capital city of Paris and of bringing the revolution to a halt. When Louis XVI was sentenced to death, they demanded a referendum because they were convinced that they could thereby save the king. The Montagnards fought most vigorously the attempts to introduce the referendum as a counterrevolutionary measure. For this reason, Louis Blanc gave his polemic against direct legislation and against Rittinghausen and Considerant the title of *Plus des Girondins – No More Girondins* (Blanc 1851).

venes. Social democracy stands in irreconcilable opposition to all other parties; it is in its vital interest to bring out this opposition to the full. Wherever the party appears, therefore, election campaigns inevitably and increasingly become struggles between great principles. The population becomes acquainted with new ideas and is compelled to occupy itself with these ideas. Even if here and there social democrats who are soft-hearted or too clever by half should attempt to hide their revolutionary aims, it will be to no avail. Our enemies themselves would ensure that the population understands that there is the most profound contradiction between the social democratic and the bourgeois candidate: not just when it comes to this or that side issue, but in their entire worldview.

The development of great contradictions also works towards ensuring that the small differences and on occasion contradictions – the small, particular and momentary interests that emerge between the various professions and layers within one and the same class – recede behind great, permanent and general interests. Whenever they involve class struggles, parliamentary battles and election campaigns in particular stimulate the separation of the individual classes. On the other hand, they also promote the fusion of the individual elements within each of the fighting classes. They are a powerful means of awakening and strengthening class-consciousness, a powerful means of uniting the proletarians under one banner, of generating enthusiasm and excitement for far-reaching goals amongst the workers and of having them enter into the struggle for them as a united phalanx.

In this way, the election campaign promotes the separation of the parties amongst the people; in this way, it becomes a powerful lever of organisation and discipline, as well as of enlightenment and propaganda. This aspect of the election campaign is so important that it is mainly for this reason that social democracy also champions universal suffrage even in countries where parliament is by no means the decisive factor and where it plays a very modest role in relation to the government: that is to say, in countries where the possibility of positively influencing the legislative process and the state administration is very small. This explains the bourgeois parties' fear of each and every election campaign where there is a powerful social-democratic movement that can legally participate in the elections.

Direct legislation by the people has the opposite effect. Here the population is not called to vote on entire, comprehensive programmes for the reorganisation of society and politics, but merely on a single measure, a single proposal – which, moreover, always has to be adapted to the momentary power relations in state and society, if it is to be a 'practical' vote and not intended as a mere gesture.

We have seen above that a law is usually the result of a compromise. This is particularly true today, at a time when so many parties appear on the political stage and the old bourgeois parties are so split.

Some have argued that parliamentary corruption stems from this need for compromise. We think that this is an exaggeration. After all, the parties send their most perceptive and experienced politicians to parliament. As a rule, these people know full well what they are doing when they enter into a compromise: in making a compromise they are neither led astray nor are their fundamental beliefs shaken. If, in the act of compromise on legislative proposals, weaknesses of character and unscrupulousness come to light, then these characteristics already existed before. Compromise did not produce these weaknesses, but merely brought them to light.

The supporters of direct legislation are of a different opinion, but they are replacing one evil with another by transferring votes on draft laws to the people, for this means nothing else than relocating the root cause of corruption from the parliament to the people! For there can be no legislation without compromise; the great mass of people, which does not consist of trained politicians, must be confused all the more easily and led further astray by compromises than the politicians in parliament. If it was the compromise in voting on bills that was the cause of corruption, then this would exert a much more damaging influence than in enacting legislation in parliament.

But what is certain is this: there is hardly one practical demand on today's legislative process which would be particularly unique to a single party. Even social democracy can hardly make such a demand. What distinguishes it from the other parties is the *totality* of its practical demands – the aims to which these demands point. The eight-hour day, for example, is in and of itself not a revolutionary demand; within the framework of the social-democratic programme, it is a means of raising the working class and of contributing to its socio-political maturity, to its ability to take the work of liberation and social transformation into its own hands. The same eight-hour day can be a conservative demand within the framework of the programme of a party of social reform that banks on the delusion of being able to reconcile the working class with the existing social order through concessions.

Thus, if the population is not presented with entire party programmes, but merely individual legislative measures to be accepted or rejected, then this inevitably leads to a situation where all the individual parties who have an interest in this measure – as hostile as they may otherwise be towards each other – now suddenly pull in the same direction and to a certain extent cooperate. Do we really believe that educating the large and as of yet indifferent mass of the people is thereby made any easier? Direct legislation by the people has

the tendency to restrict, not promote, the separation of the population into parties; over and again it creates new bridges between the parties that usually diverge from each other in various directions – simultaneously, it works towards reducing cohesion within the individual parties.

What holds political parties together – particularly when they have a great historical role to fulfil, such as the social democratic party – are its final goals, not its immediate demands; not ideas about how the party should behave regarding all the individual issues that confront it. Differences of insight, temperament, interests, tradition and so on can be found within every party; they will result in the most varied differences of opinion. Naturally, these differences can only relate to some of the party's imminent tasks, not its final goals and not the method that is generally to be followed in achieving them. After all, without unity on these points, combining such disparate elements into a party would be an absurdity.

As I have argued, differences of opinion will always exist within a party, and on occasion they can reach a threatening pitch. But, the more lively the awareness of the great goals common to all party members, the more powerful the enthusiasm for them, the more difficult it will be for such differences to blow the party apart, with the demands and interests of the moment taking a back seat relative to the party's goals. From this point of view as well, elections, which have an enlightening and incentivising effect, are invaluable for social democracy.

By contrast, direct legislation tends to distract interest from the general matters of principle to a focus on concrete, individual questions. The more this tendency comes into effect, the more it reduces cohesion within each party, at least in relation to several of these questions. And the discussions which would otherwise take place within the party are now carried into the mass of the population, to layers which have only started to come into contact with the party and can easily split from it due to momentary differences.

Sectarianism, which one-sidedly becomes fixated on this or that measure, can be strengthened by direct democracy; the party system cannot. Were it possible to replace the representative system with direct legislation by the people, then this would lead to the complete dissolution of parties. This is admitted by the supporters of direct democracy themselves – they have even hailed it as one of the advantages of direct democracy. The dissolution of parties will not happen, of course, because it is impossible to transfer legislation completely to the population as a whole. But, under certain circumstances, even the referendum and the initiative following the Swiss model can strongly counteract, on the one hand, the intensification of antagonisms within the party and, on the other, the consolidation and disciplining of parties.

But this is not in the interest of social democracy. Other parties can put the wealth or the influence of some of their members in the balance. Social democracy can only assert itself through the combined strength of the fighting proletariat.

In some circles it has again become fashionable to turn up one's nose at the party system. That is nothing new. The anarchist and other literati socialisms of our day merely repeat what the utopian socialists said two generations ago, albeit much more thoroughly and free of the cheap sensationalism and smugness of these gentlemen. Moreover, the early supporters of the idea of legislation by the people emphasised the same ideas again.[4]

This view was understandable wherever the bourgeois party system in politics ruled exclusively (with the exception of England, where the Chartist party flourished) and the class struggle as the lever of the emancipation of the proletariat was not yet clearly understood. It is absurd if one adopts the position of *The Communist Manifesto*.

Only as a political party can the working class in its entirety achieve a solid, permanent union. Purely economic struggles always merely concern one or several professions – mainly those in a small locality, town or province. In and of themselves alone, none of these struggles are yet the class struggle. At first, they never concern the interests of the entire working class, but merely the

4 (Kautsky's footnote): 'It is time', declared Considerant, 'to put an end to usurping governments, dynasties and parties. But that can only happen when the parties disappear in the nation. The collective will of the people is the sole law that the people itself can regard as legitimate. Since we live in an age where no party may believe that the other party will strive to clear the field and to destroy them, it is evident that society has to find itself in a permanent revolution, in an open or latent war, until the democratic nation has been completely filled with the principle and taken over the handling of its affairs and the management of its affairs … Once popular legislation has been grasped by the people, we will arrive at the end of political development. The different kinds of socialism, which are already present or are in the process of coming into existence, will no longer be able to think about imposing themselves dictatorially and to attempt to be realised through a government authority that is alien to the national will as a whole. Gone are the dangers that arose in particular from political problems becoming complicated with social problems, and with them all the concerns, all the horrors which are artificially exploited by the monarchist schemers of all fatherlands. The various kinds of socialism or, in other words, the various proposals for solving the social question necessarily become what they should be: ideas that develop freely in the nation … since they can no longer be political parties which aspire to political power, they will become schools which compete amongst each other for the possession of insight' (quoted in Curti 1885, p. 204). Thus, under direct legislation by the people a social-democratic party would be impossible, still less the dictatorship of the proletariat. The latter can only emancipate itself through – lectures it gives to the 'people'. We have reproduced the above passage in full because it is indicative of the train of thought amongst supporters of popular legislation.

particular interests of a certain branch. Wherever the workers have not gone as far as to organise themselves into an independent political workers' party, wherever they remain restricted to their purely economic organisations, trade unions and mutual-benefit funds, it is all too easy for the particular interests of a section to come to the fore: class-consciousness – without which social-revolutionary action is impossible – has not been awakened. The worker who does not feel that he is a proletarian, but merely a typesetter, hatter or metal-worker and who merely represents the interests of typesetters, hatters or metal-workers, can behave very radically in relation to various questions, such as in an angry atheism, but his radical behaviour will remain that of a mere pot caster in the pub, like the philistine who has become agitated and flails around in a 'revolutionary' fashion. His actions will have no influence on the transformation of society in the proletarian sense.

The formation and activity of a specifically workers' party, which seeks to conquer political power for the working class, already presupposes highly developed class-consciousness amongst one section of the workers. But the activity of this workers' party is the surest means of awakening and promoting class-consciousness amongst the *mass* of the workers. The party only recognises objectives and tasks which concern the proletariat as a whole; it has no place for the jealousies of individual specialised organisations.[5] Purely economic organisations, being merely sectional organisations, can only set themselves goals within the present-day mode of production. However, as the representative of the class interests of the proletariat as a whole, the workers' party – if it is grounded in a social democratic outlook from the outset – must sooner or later inevitably come to fight against the current mode of production, within which the emancipation of the proletariat is impossible. If the trade-union activist is conservative even when he acts in a radical fashion, then each and every independent political workers' party is by its nature always revolutionary, even if it is 'moderate' in appearance and even in the eyes of its members.

Thus we revolutionary socialists do not have the slightest reason to wish that the 'parties should go under in the nation', as Victor Considerant[6] demands and,

5 (Kautsky's footnote): America – where individual workers' organisations conduct bitter war on each other and on occasion do not hesitate to engage in labours of love for the capitalists if this means dealing a blow to another workers' organisation opposed to it – shows where a trade union movement can lead if it does not go hand-in-hand with a powerful, independent political workers' movement.

6 Victor Prosper Considerant (1808–93) was a French utopian socialist who was a member of the First International and a participant in both the 1848 revolution and the Paris Commune of 1871.

to the extent that direct legislation by the people has this kind of effect, it will merely inhibit the proletariat's efforts towards emancipation.

This is not to say, however, that direct legislation by the people (of course, in those of its forms in which it can at all be realised) is under all circumstances reprehensible in today's society, a society of class and party contradictions. That would be to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

In our view, from what has been said above it follows that referenda and the initiative do not belong to those democratic institutions which can be demanded by the proletariat everywhere and under all circumstances in the interests of its emancipation. The referendum and the initiative are institutions which under certain circumstances can be quite useful, even though these effects must not be overestimated, because on occasion they can also cause great harm. We should thus not aim to introduce the referendum and the initiative everywhere and in all circumstances, but only where certain preconditions are fulfilled.

Among these preconditions we include the absence of the contradiction between city and country, which is almost the case in Switzerland, or – even more advantageously – the predominance of the urban population over the rural population, something which has hitherto only been achieved in England. Another prerequisite is an advanced political party life that has gripped the great mass of the population, so that the effect direct democracy has in dissolving parties and in bridging the opposition between parties can no longer be feared. But the most important condition is the absence of an overly centralised independent state administration that stands opposed to parliament.

Wherever such a system exists, wherever parliamentarism is only a sham parliamentarism – and still today this is true of the great majority of European states – the weakening of parliamentarism in the form of direct legislation by the people does not benefit the people, but the government; quite apart from the fact that under the rule of a 'strong government' direct legislation could only be implemented in a form where the people are merely called on whenever it suits the government. Under a government of this kind, which actually has the entire immense apparatus of the modern state unconditionally at its disposal in order to influence the population, the downsides of direct legislation mentioned above – the favouring of the reactionary countryside at the cost of the revolutionary cities, the degradation and blurring of the parties – must be expressed in the worst manner. 'People's legislation' now becomes a 'plebiscite', and what this means has been shown by the French Empire.

In bureaucratic-military states, where the government is confronted by the mere shadow of a parliament, not a real one, then it is not the task of the emer-

ging, revolutionary classes to remove this shadow's last vestiges of power; that would be suicide and they would thereby carry out the government's work for it. Rather, their task is to enliven the shadow, to give it blood and to make it capable of resisting the government.

We understand perfectly well why party comrades in Switzerland advocate direct legislation so enthusiastically. Nowhere are the preconditions for it as fully developed as in the Swiss Confederation. And the current situation forces them towards this activity. In Switzerland, a sort of equilibrium has set in between the classes: no class is able to undertake a great action on its own. On the other hand, when it comes to political rights, our Swiss comrades are fortunate enough to have already for the most part everything that can be demanded. If they want to have a positive effect, if they want to be active practically, if they do not wish to limit themselves to agitation and gestures, then they cannot do much else than make this or that small improvement to the political edifice, which is by and large finished.

But one size does not fit all. We Germans and Austrians have different things to do. We have to engage in the great and bitter struggle against militarism and absolutism. The burden of this struggle falls almost entirely on social democracy. The bourgeoisie has long ceased to see parliament as the chosen instrument of its rule – as an instrument that is safe under all circumstances. It feels that it has become impossible to keep the proletariat away from it, and that the hour is approaching where the proletariat in Austria will conquer universal suffrage and where in Germany it will conquer parliament with the aid of universal suffrage. The bourgeoisie feels that it is lost if parliamentarism becomes a truth; it no longer seeks salvation in this system, but in militarism and absolutism.

In the 1850s and 60s, when the bourgeoisie in parliament – to the extent that there were parliaments – ruled without restriction, it was possible to believe that the proletariat's struggle for political power would be one that would involve the elimination of parliament. Today increasingly shows that, in eastern Europe at least, this struggle is becoming one for parliamentarism and against absolutism and militarism.

Indeed, the bourgeoisie in Europe east of the Rhine has become so weak and cowardly that it seems that the regime of the bureaucrat and the sabre cannot be broken until such a point when the proletariat is able to conquer political power, and that the overthrow of military absolutism will lead directly to the proletariat's encroachment on political power.

One thing is for sure: in Germany as in Austria – indeed, in most European countries – the preconditions that are necessary for the beneficial functioning of legislation by the people, the necessary democratic institutions, will not become a reality before the victory of the proletariat.

Before this, legislation by the people can perhaps have a certain application in the United States, in England and in the English colonies – and in certain circumstances in France – but for us eastern Europeans it is part of the inventory of the 'state of the future'.

PART 2

Karl Kautsky, The Republic and Social Democracy in France (*1905*)

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CHAPTER 1

Clarifying the Dispute

The International Congress[1] has had an unexpected aftermath. Following a series of statements they made in Amsterdam, Bebel and Guesde have been accused of indifference to the republic, even of a certain preference for the monarchy. It was not surprising that the bourgeois press seized on this – it does not know any better. The fact that Jaurès and his friends spread this interpretation of events was less edifying, but understandable from their point of view. But eventually, after I had examined the reasons why social-democratic republicanism differs from bourgeois republicanism in the *Neue Zeit*, even *Vorwärts* began to sing from the same hymn sheet.

A polemic which consequently unfolded between comrade Eisner[2] and me[3] soon went in a direction which made me realise that an understanding between us would not be achieved in this manner. I thus broke off the polemic – not because I could thereby admit defeat, as Eisner so kindly pointed out – but in order to continue the debate on a different and in my opinion more productive basis by setting aside all polemics as much as possible. Urgent work on the publication of Marx's *Theories of Surplus Value*[4] prevented me from finishing this series of articles earlier. But its postponement was not the end of the world. The issue will not become out-dated that quickly.

Above all we must clarify which points are actually under dispute. First, I can only first repeat what I have said already: 'We are republicans for the very reason that the democratic republic is the only political form corresponding

1 This refers to the sixth congress of the Second International, held in Amsterdam from August 14–18 1904. Amongst other things, the congress discussed the question of socialist participation in government and the general strike. There is an interesting account of the congress by Daniel de Leon, chairman of the Socialist Labor Party of America's delegation (de Leon 1904).

2 Kurt Eisner (1878–1919) was an editor of *Vorwärts* in 1898, working as a literary critic. He was a revisionist. In 1914 he opposed war on pacifist grounds, joining the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD) split in 1917. He organised a network of delegates in Munich factories. He was sentenced to eight months in jail after the strikes of January 1918. The leader of the Bavarian revolution in November and new prime minister of Bavaria, he was assassinated on 21 February 1919.

3 The exchange is available online (Kautsky 1904a).

4 Marx 1975–2004; 1975–2004a; 1975–2004b.

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to socialism. The monarchy can only exist on the basis of class differences and antagonisms. The abolition of classes also requires the abolition of the monarchy'.[5]

To be sure, there has been talk of 'social kingship'. But the monarchy can never abolish classes. At most, it can strive to ensure that the classes balance each other out, that no class dominates another too much. The most important proponent of the idea of social kingship, Rodbertus,[6] therefore did not demand the abolition of capital and landed property. Nor did he demand the abolition of the wage system, which he considered indispensable for centuries to come. He merely demanded a configuration of the working wage which would ensure that it shared in the increasing productivity of labour in the same way that profit and rent do.

As the power of the monarchy is at its greatest when the different classes balance each other out (that is, when the monarchy is least dependent on any one of the classes and controls each class through the other), under certain circumstances it can be in the monarchy's interest to oppose a strong class in order to protect a weaker one. For this reason royalty has often supported the rising bourgeoisie *vis-à-vis* the feudal aristocracy. But, for the same reason, the monarchy has to strive to sustain a weakening class, even if this comes at the cost of economic development or opposing an ascendant class. The very same monarchy, whose interests demanded that it protect the weak bourgeoisie against the strong feudal bourgeoisie, later saw it as its task to keep the economically degenerate feudal nobility above water at the cost of the nation, curtailing the development of the bourgeoisie as much as possible.

Thus, from time to time, the monarchy has also granted the proletariat political rights or other concessions in order to play it off against the bourgeoisie. But the ascendant proletariat always finds the monarchy amongst its opponents.

And from the outset the monarchy always views the fighting proletariat with suspicion – more so than any other class. For whatever class it may be advancing through its political interests at any given moment, it is always separated from the proletariat by the gulf that separates the propertied from the propertyless. Both the monarchy and papacy can undergo the most variegated of

5 I was unable to locate the reference Kautsky provides.

6 Karl Johann Rodbertus (1805–75) was a German economist and *Kathedersozialist*. He championed Prussian *Junker* development along bourgeois lines, believing that the contradictions between labour and capital could be resolved through reforms carried out by the Prussian state. He maintained that all economic crises resulted from low national consumption.

transformations, but they always remain members of the propertied classes – and, as such, opponents of the emancipation of the proletariat.

This also explains the opposition of the fighting proletariat. Both the worker's class movement and his ultimate goal make the class-conscious worker a republican. While this or that propertied class can be driven to republican sentiment here or there in special circumstances, only the proletariat becomes republican *in principle* due to its position among the classes of the modern state. Surely, we all agree on that. But this does not eradicate the dispute. It merely defines its sphere.

Insofar as the republican form of government and the proletariat come into consideration, the matter is, of course, very simple. The difficulty comes about through a third factor, which we unfortunately cannot ignore: the bourgeoisie.

This class holds power in today's economic and social life. With this also falls to it the power of the state, albeit a power which is not always direct and undivided. The bourgeoisie is far more adaptive than the proletariat.

If, in accordance with its class position, the proletariat can only come to power in the republic, if the republic is the only possible form of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', then the bourgeoisie is able to seize state power in every political form. In this the bourgeoisie is like the Catholic Church, with which it shares a robust digestive system. The bourgeoisie is most directly able to exercise its rule in a parliamentary republic or a parliamentary monarchy, whose head is merely decorative. The parliamentary form of government is the one which most corresponds to its class interests.

Thus, the same republic which forms the basis for the emancipation of the proletariat can at the same time become the basis for the class domination of the bourgeoisie. This is a contradiction, but one which is no stranger than the contradictory role played by the machine in capitalist society: the machine is both the indispensable precondition for the liberation of the proletariat and at the same time the means of its degradation and enslavement. These contradictions are particular to all social institutions in a society built on class contradictions. Identifying them only appears as a contradiction in terms to those who are not clear about the contradictions in real society. Those who have identified these contradictions will no more deduce the glorification of the monarchy from a critique of the bourgeois republic than they will perceive Marx's remarks in *Capital* on the degrading tendencies of machinery as a glorification of machine-free petty production.

Whether we recognise the contradiction which lies in the role of the republic in civil society or explain it as the product of an error in reasoning thus depends on whether and to what extent we recognise the effects of class contradictions on political life. In praise of the republic, Kurt Eisner stated in *Vorwärts* 'that in

bourgeois democracy, from the conditions of its own existence the proletariat must be far more intensively courted by the various groups of the ruling classes than in a monarchy, and that in a republic the class struggle appears to be more obscured … hence the interest in duping the workers'.[7]

I do not dispute that at all. Rather, in my article on the Amsterdam Congress I explicitly recognised it. However, I differ from Eisner in that that I dispute the possibility of such a courtship constantly disguising the class struggle. I also differ from him in that it is impossible for me to discover an advantage for the proletariat in the class struggle being obscured.

Whoever accepts the former must be of the opinion that between 'the various groups of the ruling classes … far more intensive' antagonistic interests exist than between the propertied classes on the one hand and the proletariat on the other. Whoever accepts the latter must be of the opinion that the class struggle is an evil – perhaps an unavoidable one, but an evil nonetheless. If this evil can be weakened and obscured as much as possible in order to benefit the proletariat, then the republic is to be preferred to the monarchy.

This is indeed the view of Jaurès and his friends – and in this they are in stark contrast to the Marxists, who explain that the class antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat is a fundamental and irreconcilable one, which goes far deeper than any clash of interests within the propertied classes.

To be sure, the propertied classes have every reason to engage in 'duping the workers', but only in the rarest and most transitory cases do they concede real concessions for this purpose – concessions which make the proletariat stronger and more fit for action. As a rule, these are pseudo-concessions made to split the proletariat, to lull it, to lead it astray or to corrupt it – in short, to weaken it. In the long run, however, these cannot overcome class contradictions anywhere. Sooner or later these contradictions break through again and again: the more concessions the bourgeoisie has previously made to the proletariat, the more it must feel threatened when the proletariat begins to apply these democratic achievements in its own class interest instead of in the service of the bourgeoisie, and the more energetically every attempt at repression by the bourgeoisie must fail, since, as soon as the proletariat stands on its own feet and has enough of the game, in the republic the bourgeoisie is far more directly threatened than under a monarchy.

We Marxists see an advantage of the republic precisely in the fact that under these circumstances class contradictions burst asunder more directly and starkly than at the same level of economic development in a monarchy.

7 Kautsky 1904a.

Were the republic, as Eisner eulogises, really to 'obscure class contradictions', then in our eyes this would have to be considered a serious disadvantage of that form of government. As long as society is based on class contradictions, we see in these contradictions the driving force of social development – not in the categorical imperative of Kantian ethics,[8] nor in the intoxicating power of the slogans of bourgeois democracy.

The issue is now clearly defined. It is not about whether the proletariat should favour the republic or not. We all agree on this. The question is whether the republic mitigates the class antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and proletariat or whether it exacerbates them. In the republic, is the bourgeoisie driven to be friendlier to the workers, to promote the liberation of the proletariat more, or to obstruct it less, than in the monarchy?

And on the other hand: is it the task of social democracy to support the undeniable striving of the bourgeois republicans to obscure class differences? Is it social democracy's task to promote the belief that the republican bourgeois is friendlier to the workers than the monarchist bourgeois? What is it about? If this defines the matter at hand, then it also defines the area to which it applies. The question can only arise in a republic: it is virtually irrelevant in a monarchy. The question can only occupy us in Germany because of our international relations, because of the necessity of clarifying differences with the French comrades. For Germany (with the exception of the few Hanseatic cities which are not democratic republics) the republic does not in any way signify a form of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. For us, only the other side of the republic comes into consideration – the republic as a means of the emancipation of the proletariat.

8 This is a polemical point. Kautsky is drawing attention to Eisner's rejection of dialectics and his espousal of Kantian ethics.

CHAPTER 2

The American Republic

One can explain our matter of dispute in two ways. One way is to investigate abstractly the essence of the republic, the republic of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat and its class contradictions – a very cumbersome path, which is all the more tiring for not leading through very well-known territory. For our practical purposes it is certainly shorter and less fatiguing to investigate not an abstract republic, but a concrete one, the one around which the whole controversy revolves – the French.

However, simply in order to highlight that we are not dealing with a specifically French issue, but a problem particular to each and every bourgeois republic, let us quickly deal with the American republic, which represents a very different type to that of the French. In the French republic we see the extensive centralisation of administration as well as intellectual and political life in a huge capital, the greatest possible limits on the autonomy of the municipalities and departments and all the means of class domination – military, police and state church – highly developed. All of these are absent in the United States. There, class antagonisms have been particularly weak for a very long time.

The basis of capitalist exploitation is formed by separation of the mass of the population from their means of labour, especially from the most important of these means – land. But for a long time in the US there was more than enough land for all who demanded it. Thus not only could anybody become an independent farmer: the internal market grew too, as did the demand for intellectuals – lawyers, administrators, etc. The most brilliant careers were opened up to anybody who was sufficiently energetic and intelligent, even those who began without means. Especially to workers who were best placed to take advantage, the position of a wage worker simply appeared to be a transitional phase. This prevented the workers from obtaining proletarian class-consciousness just as much as it held the capitalists back from harassing the proletariat – or at least its most militant layers – and challenging it to fight. The republic did not seem to allow class struggle and socialism to develop.

But, as is well known, this has changed enormously in recent decades. As Hillquit puts it:

'In 1870 strikes and lockouts were hardly known in America; between 1887 and 1894 the country witnessed 14,000 disputes between capital and labour,

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in which about four million working men participated'.[1] But, the more the American proletariat grows and class contradictions increase, the more the bourgeoisie is anxious to use all means the republic offers it to suppress the proletariat. It engages in the much-vaunted 'duping the workers' on the most tremendous scale – not through social reforms (those which have been passed recently are not worth talking about), but by systematically corrupting the masses, by flooding the country with a commercially bribable [*käuflich*] press, by buying votes in elections, by winning over influential labour leaders.

Today, in every country, they are trying these methods to confuse and corrupt the workers. Even absolutist Russia saw the attempts of the police officer, Zubatov,[2] to create a workers' movement kept on a lead by the police. But nowhere are these experiments carried out on such a scale and with such tenacity as in the republic, precisely because of the power of the ballot paper, the press and the trade unions. But these efforts are nowhere more successful than in the republic.

The traditions of the past live on in the American worker, traditions where each one of them carried a marshal's baton in his satchel. The American worker still believes that thanks to his democracy he is better off than workers living under monarchies, and that he has no need of socialism, a mere product of European despotism. He still believes that in democracy there are no classes and no class rule, because the whole people hold political power. The main task of our American comrades today is to destroy this republican superstition, to make the worker see reason, to point out that he is no less exploited and enslaved than his comrade living in a monarchy and that, just like in a monarchy, democracy has become a tool of class rule, that democracy can only again become a tool to break this class rule when he has overcome its republican superstitions.

That is what our American comrades' agitation consists of today – and they would laugh mockingly at anybody who wanted to make them believe that the republican bourgeoisie's 'duping the workers' brought the proletariat any benefits.

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1 Morris Hillquit (1869–1933) was a founder member of the Socialist Party of America. The English text quoted here is taken from Hillquit 1903.

2 Sergei Vasilyevich Zubatov (1864–1917) was a Tsarist police administrator. Having been active in the Russian workers' movement in his early years, he became disillusioned with the revolutionary cause and – convinced that repression alone could not thwart the increasing threat posed by the labour movement – he established pro-government unions between 1901 and 1903. He has thus become associated with 'police socialism'. A convinced monarchist, he committed suicide when hearing of Tsar Nicholas II's abdication in March 1917.

In their agitation against the republican 'duping of the workers', the American socialists are strongly supported by the fact that in using this means to hold down the proletariat, the American bourgeoisie does not stand still. As much as it would like to, the American bourgeoisie is unable to 'obscure' class contradictions permanently: the veil it attempts to throw over them tears again and again, and, the more zealously it attempts to tame the working class using the carrot, the more angrily it employs the stick when the carrot fails. One has only to remember what happened in Colorado[3] to show how brutally the bourgeoisie uses all the instruments of power made available by the republic if it is necessary to crush recalcitrant workers.

In America, therefore, republican superstitions have very little resonance in party circles. In France, however, the matter is not so simple.

3 This refers to the miners' strikes of 1903–4 in the Cripple Creek District. The all-out walkout turned into what are now known as the 'Colorado labour wars'. The anti-union Republican governor, J.H. Peabody, declared martial law, with the state militia crushing organised labour and sending many of its leaders into exile.

CHAPTER 3

The First Republic

In one of his Amsterdam talks and again recently in a series of articles in *L'Humanité*,[1] Jaurès explained that the peculiarity of proletarian tactics in France was justified by the French Revolution. These tactics had to be the precise opposite of those German tactics inaugurated by Marx and Lassalle[2] because Germany had unfortunately never known a proper revolution. Jaurès's tactics are indeed the opposite not merely of those of Guesde, but also of Marx, Lassalle and German tactics more generally, whereas those of Guesde and the Germans are based on the same reasoning – that much is true.

But this is only something incidental. What comes into consideration here is Jaurès's thesis that the French Revolution has prescribed different tactics to the French proletariat than those of the German proletariat. Thanks to the revolution and the republic, since its beginning the proletariat has played a great historical role 'by initially supporting the revolutionary bourgeoisie and then dragging them along with it'.[3]

Here too there is a kernel of truth. No doubt, thanks to the revolution (which itself was a consequence of a particular economic development and severe

1 When the French socialist movement split over the attitude to be taken toward the Third International at the Tours congress of 1920, *L'Humanité* went into the hands of the French Communist Party (PCF). The newspaper is still published as a daily today.

2 Ferdinand Lassalle (11 April 1825–31 August 1864) was a controversial figure in the history of the German workers' movement. Through his strict, dictatorial leadership of the General German Workers' Association (ADAV) he contributed much to breaking the German working class from liberalism and establishing an independent working-class party, the principles behind which he outlined in his famous 'Open Letter' of 1863. Yet simultaneously he held a host of ideas which were clearly inimical to the idea of working-class independence, not least his views on the Prussian state and his flirtation with a possible alliance with Otto von Bismarck and the German *Junker* class against the bourgeoisie. For an interesting discussion of his impact on German social democracy, see Lih 2008, pp. 53–61, for whom Lassalle's 'emotional appeal of the call to a historical mission and the organisational implications of preparing the workers to carry out that mission' mean that he 'can indeed be called the first Social Democrat' (Lih 2008, p. 60). In 1893, Eduard Bernstein wrote an 'orthodox Marxist' appreciation of Lassalle's life which was heavily influenced by Friedrich Engels (Bernstein 1970).

3 The original French is: '… *la Révolution à la française, l'assaut donné aux anciens pouvoirs par une bourgeoisie révolutionnaire qu'assiste d'abord, qu'entraîne ensuite un prolétariat toujours plus hardi et plus fort*' – '… a French-style revolution, the assault against the former powers by a revolutionary bourgeoisie which was assisted at first, and dragged along afterwards, by a tougher and stronger proletariat.'

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exacerbation of class conflict) the proletariat achieved great political significance in France earlier than in any other country. But this was only in part due to its 'initially supporting the revolutionary bourgeoisie and then dragging them along with it'. For the most part, it was achieved through the proletariat's coming to loggerheads with the bourgeoisie and fighting it.

At the end of the eighteenth century the feudal monarchy had led France into a situation comparable to that in Russia today: defeats abroad, corruption and economic ruin at home. Completely bringing down the system of government had become a vital question for the entire nation, something in which all classes that did not have a direct share in the existing state administration were interested. But even back then this overthrow of the system of government would not have been possible without the intervention of the lower classes: petty bourgeois, peasants, proletarians. They armed themselves, stormed the Bastille, burned down the castles of the nobility, abolished feudal burdens and began the self-administration of their communities.

The National Constituent Assembly merely confirmed what the people had carried out. The decree of 14 December 1789 recognised the complete self-administration of the municipality. No government official stood above it. The municipality also received its own armed forces in the form of the armed citizens, the National Guard, which elected its own officers; the decree of 22 December laid down the self-administration of the *départements*: on 5 May 1790, the election of judges by the people was established; on 12 July, it was finally determined that every municipality would elect its own pastor, every *département* would elect its own bishop.

This upheaval of the constitution corresponded to an upheaval of taxation. The ruling class always knows how to offload state debt – a state which both protects the ruling class and is exploited by it – onto the exploited and suppressed classes. One can therefore recognise the social character of a state by looking at how the ruling class does this.

Of course, the Great Revolution eradicated the tax exemption of the privileged classes, but it also abolished indirect taxation – taxes on salt and drinks, the tobacco monopoly, internal tariffs and the municipal *octroi*.[4] In addition to the national tariffs and the proceeds from state and municipal property, which were increased enormously by church assets, state revenue was to be set through a single direct tax on net income. This, according to the prevailing physiocratic teaching at the time,[5] was seen exclusively in ground rent. In

4 An *octroi* is a local tax collected on various articles brought into a district for consumption. It stems from the French '*octroyer*' – to grant, authorise.

5 The physiocratic school of economics was influential in eighteenth-century France. Its basic thesis was that all value can ultimately be traced back to the land.

this way the people had made the instruments of class rule their own: the state administration, the judiciary, the army and the church. They also shifted the burden of maintaining the state from themselves onto the upper classes: a tremendous achievement indeed, accomplished by the supportive and propulsive intervention of the proletariat in the bourgeoisie's struggle against the monarchy.

But even then, as conceited harmony existed between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the class contradictions between them at most came to light in sporadic food riots devoid of political significance, the class instincts of the bourgeoisie warned them against granting excessive political concessions to the proletariat. As it could not even dare to confiscate the proletariat's newly won freedom, it attempted at least indirectly to monopolise this freedom by creating a distinction between the active citizen and the passive citizen.

It was not the people who were armed, but only the active citizens; only they could elect the municipalities, representatives, judges, priests, etc. and (eventually) the deputies to the national assembly. But, according to the decree of 22 December 1789, only those who were over 18, had lived for a year in the district and paid a direct tax to the sum of at least that of three normal day labourers, were considered to be active citizens. The number of active citizens was four million in a population of 26 million. Furthermore, all these elections were indirect ones, and since the bourgeoisie still did not feel sufficiently protected by this, they made election to the national assembly contingent on the possession of property and the payment of a direct tax to the sum of one silver mark (50 francs).

The rampart protecting the census politically was joined by the professional army. With regiments it had often recruited from abroad, the old army remained in force alongside the National Guard. In part, these old army regiments could still be used against the people and remained subjected to the discipline of aristocratic officers. Ultimately, the monarchy remained as a rampart of the bourgeoisie. Although the monarchy was subordinate to the parliament, the national assembly, it did retain its command over the army, its appointment of governing ministers and its right, at least for a certain period of time, to withhold consent from decisions of the national assembly, without which these decisions could not become law (the veto).

The big bourgeoisie clung to the monarchy and the army as the last bulwark against the storm of the revolutionary people – the petty bourgeois and proletarians. And when Louis XVI attempted to flee abroad from Paris in order to draw on the help of foreign monarchs to prop up his tottering throne, his capture led to the first hostile encounter of the two classes in the revolution. Whereas the masses demanded that the king abdicate, the majority of the national assembly

defended him. The extent to which this majority was conscious of its class interests in doing so is shown by what Barnave[6] said back then: 'The revolution must pause: one more step along the path of freedom and we will see the abolition of property'.

When on 17 July 1791 a petition was launched on the Champ-de-Mars demanding the abdication of the King and the people flocked in droves to sign it, the 'freedom fighter' Lafayette[7] moved in with the bourgeois National Guard of Paris and violently dispersed the crowd in a bloody massacre. That was a worthy introduction to the class struggle of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Barnave had been right: the bourgeoisie needed the revolution to come to an end. The bourgeoisie had achieved what it needed. Every further step on the path of the revolution had to turn against property: that is, against the bourgeoisie itself.

But, in the struggles of 1789 and 1790, the subordinate masses, especially those in Paris, had recognised their power. They had won, but the fruits of victory had fallen to the propertied bourgeoisie. They could not be content with this. They had to strive to march further along the path of freedom and equality to work their way out of poverty and misery. And, since the bourgeoisie resisted the masses' attempts to drag the bourgeoisie along with them in this, heavy fighting soon had to unfold between the two classes.

Their conflicts were further intensified by the war conducted by the allied monarchies of Europe against revolutionary France – a war in which France could only assert itself through the most energetic mobilisation of all its resources, as well as the mobilisation of the inconsideration the lower classes felt for property. Now (in 1792 and 1793) the monarchy was smashed to pieces, universal suffrage was proclaimed, the old army was completely dissolved and replaced by the arming of the whole people; now the wealth of the rich was used to feed the army and the poor. But this happened at a time of terror – a time of terror for the bourgeoisie, which felt neither 'supported' nor 'dragged along' by this regime. They did not at all consider acts such as the execution of the Girondists[8] to be products of the 'cooperation of the classes'.

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6 Antoine Barnave (1761–93) was one of the most influential orators of the early French Revolution. He was one of the founding members of the Feuillants, a splinter group from the Jacobins that opposed the overthrow of the monarchy in favour of a constitutional variant.

7 A reference to Marquis de Lafayette (1757–1834), a military officer who played important roles in the American Revolutionary War, the French Revolution of 1789 and the July Revolution of 1830.

8 In the French Revolution, the Girondists were the representatives of the big bourgeoisie in the Convention of 1792–4, the parliament set up to replace the monarchy. The Girondists were 'the party of order', vacillating between democratic measures and compromise with the

The reign of terror, this dictatorship, even if it was not the dictatorship of the proletariat alone, necessarily arose from the prevailing circumstances. But it was equally necessarily doomed to fail. The possibility of social production was still not present, but the possibility of restricting society to the individual production of petty proprietors had already disappeared. The rule of capital had become a social necessity. As it has done everywhere in the last century, the war strengthened the tendencies propitious to capitalism, creating a huge demand for mass production and trade. As soon as the war took a turn towards victory, it created the demand for capitalism alongside capital and capitalists. Immeasurable riches of the neighbouring countries, especially of their churches, aristocrats and royal courts, filled the pockets of the victors and their exploiters. This, along with supplies for the armies, created new capitalists again and again.

Since commodity production remained intact, the reign of terror also remained subject to providing the most important of the modern means of war: money, money and more money. And since indirect taxation had almost completely been repealed and direct taxation did not yield enough, the government's main source of income came through selling confiscated ecclesiastical and aristocratic goods to people who could pay cash – that is to say, not to proletarians, but to capitalists. Land speculators bought immense areas cheaply and sold them as small plots – mainly to peasants and day workers. This was another way that the war created a vast and rich capitalist class.

With victory, the predicament which the regime of terror had made into a necessity for all revolutionary classes disappeared. Its forcible interventions into economic life became ever more unbearable – except for the proletariat. But the war robbed the proletariat of its most militant elements – not only through disease and enemy weapons, but also through booty and the fortunes of war, which lifted many a poor wretch up into the ranks of those in command and the rich. It was precisely through this that a new caste was created, separated from the people. This caste of officers had capitalist instincts and interests, taking the place of the old feudal officer corps.

Thus the balance soon had to fall back onto the side of the bourgeoisie. 9 Thermidor (27 July) 1794 – the fall of Robespierre[9] – was the turning point. The

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royalists. Their opponents were the Montagne, the 'mountain', representing the most consistent democrats based among the petty bourgeoisie and the poor. The terms 'Girondists' and 'Montagne' were also used during the revolutionary events of the nineteenth century to identify opposing currents, by analogy with the parties of the 1790s. This division is the origin of the terms 'left' and 'right'.

9 Maximilien Robespierre (1758–94) was the leader of the left Jacobins and head of the revolutionary government between 1793 and 1794. He fell from power on Thermidor 9 of the new revolutionary calendar.

overthrow of the suburbs of Paris in a series of bloody street battles from 12 Germinal to 4 Prairial (1 April to 23 May) 1795 was the ultimate disaster. The execution of Babeuf[10] on 27 May 1797 was the final act in the tragedy of the defeat of the lower masses of the people by the revolutionary bourgeoisie. Step by step, one instrument of power after the other was taken from it.

At first, of course, this meant the weapons of physical struggle: the National Guard turned into the armed bourgeoisie again. The army started to separate itself from the people again. Its officers even dared to field this army against the people. Likewise, the weapons of organisation were taken from the people: its associations were dissolved (the Jacobin Club[11] on 12 November 1794) and finally it was robbed of the ballot paper. The new constitution of year III (1795) bound the right to vote to the payment of a direct tax and residency in the constituency for at least a year. Instead of the direct elections introduced by the constitution of 1793, indirect elections were reintroduced through electors.

With this, the rule of the lower classes was broken. But the fate of the republic was sealed too. The bourgeoisie had once again detached the army from the people, placed it above the people and deployed it against the people. Now the bourgeoisie itself was subjected to the head of the army.

Following his coup of 18 Brumaire (1799), Napoleon completed the work of the republican bourgeoisie in forming the new state administration into an instrument of class rule. Administration through centralised bureaucracy replaced self-government of the municipalities and the *départements*.

The government-appointed prefect became the soul of local administration. He was placed at the head of the *département* and appointed the local councils of all municipalities in the *département*, as well as the mayor in areas with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants. The mayors of the bigger municipalities were under direct orders from the government.

Instead of a head of state elected by the people, the head of state was appointed. Admittedly, this was done by judges supposedly independent of the government. But the judges, the most active elements in the judicial process, were set to one side in favour of the public prosecutor – a government official who got his orders straight from the government and had to carry them out!

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10 Francois Babeuf (1760–97), known as Gracchus, headed the Conspiracy of Equals in the French Revolution. He and his followers wished to provoke an armed uprising of the plebeian masses against the bourgeois regime of the directory and to establish a revolutionary dictatorship as part of a transition to 'pure democracy' and 'egalitarian communism'. He and other leaders of the Conspiracy were executed for their activities.

11 At its height, the Jacobin Club had around 420,000 members. It was responsible for implementing the reign of terror. The club was closed after the fall of Robespierre.

Finally, the Church hierarchy was also restored and incorporated into the newly created state apparatus by the Concordat of 1801.[12] This Concordat still exists today. Right at this moment it is the object of fierce struggles. But it is not merely the Concordat which remains intact today. The entire constitutional structure created at the turn of the 1800s, the structure which so closely corresponded to the interests of the bourgeoisie, has in all significant aspects remained unchanged.

And what is true of the constitution is also true of tax legislation. Direct taxation again decreased in significance alongside indirect taxation, which was re-introduced and modernised. The empire renewed taxes on beverages, salt, the tobacco monopoly and the *octroi* of the municipalities, and also increased duties on imports.

The bourgeoisie had no objections to any of that. The only thing it felt uncomfortable with in the empire's constitution was the lack of parliamentarism. This is the form which best corresponds to the bourgeoisie's class rule. It strives for this form wherever it has gained economic power. In the decades after the rise and the collapse of the Empire, this was the sole thing around which all the political battles of the individual layers of the bourgeoisie revolved (high finance, big and small industrial capital, wholesale and intermediary trade): the establishment of a representative system, the increase in the rights of parliament, the configuration of the right to vote.

The lower classes of the people, on the other hand – or at least the petty bourgeoisie and proletariat in Paris – remained faithful to the idea of the republic, the only form of government through which they had ruled for two years (1792–4) and through which they had intervened decisively in the fate of Europe. The republic had been the form of their class rule. They hung onto it. They were joined by all the various ideologies, which in part more or less consciously represented the interests of the lower classes and in part became intoxicated with the greatness of the memories of 1793, without being clear on the class differences competing with each other back then.

As long as the struggles of the bourgeoisie with royalty, the junkers and the Church came to such a head that the lower classes became stirred and driven to political action, republican tendencies emerged which the bourgeoisie was at pains to suppress – in its memory, the republic was synonymous with the regime of the lower classes as well. In 1830, after banishing the Bourbons,[13] the

12 An agreement signed between Napoleon Bonaparte and Pope Pius VII, re-establishing the Roman Catholic Church as a major institution in France.

13 The House of Bourbon ruled over France from 1589 until 1792.

bourgeoisie also succeeded in spiriting the threatening republic away and helping the Orléans[14] onto the throne.

But it was not so lucky in 1848, when government provocations in response to agitation for electoral reform all of a sudden led to a struggle against the dynasty and its overthrow. This time the lower classes so thoroughly commanded the field that the republic became unavoidable. In order to save what could be saved, the bourgeois politicians had no other choice but to convert to the republic in the blink of an eye, so that they could form their government. This is how the Second Republic[15] came about.

14 A branch of the Bourbon dynasty that came to power during the July revolution of 1830 and was overthrown by the revolution of 1848.

15 The French Second Republic was the brief period of republican government between the revolution of 1848 and the 1850 coup by Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte, which brought the Second Empire into existence.

CHAPTER 4

The Second Republic and the Socialists

When the republic was proclaimed on 24 February 1848, all memories of 1793 were awoken. From the outset the lower classes regarded the republic as the surety protecting their interests, as the 'social republic' which would reassume the work of equalling out class differences and save downtrodden humanity with the same force as that of 1793, but with more success, because it was informed by all the experiences since then.

But, as Marx noted immediately after the revolution's conclusion, the only thing the men of 1848 had borrowed from the Jacobins of 1793 was their costumes. While the men of the revolution still believed that the tasks they had to carry out were the same as those of 1793, while they believed that the same forces were at their command and the same methods were called for, the battlefield, weapons and even the fighters themselves had thoroughly changed. As encouraging as the revolutionary tradition was, it became an obstacle for the new revolution, because it hampered the recognition of the real tasks at hand, as well as the means of solving them.

Above all, the situation had now become totally different, because now there was peace. When the republic came about in September 1792, the foreign enemy[1] had advanced into France, approached the capital and was about to re-erect the ruinous and universally hated feudal regime. In February 1848 peace prevailed, and it continued. In 1792, monarchist Europe had allied itself against revolutionary France. In 1848, the revolution, starting in France, seized the whole of Europe and only stopped before one monarchy on the continent: the Russian, which was careful not to oppose the revolution by force of arms as long as it was advancing.

Yet without the state of war the lower classes' reign of terror would have been impossible. The war created the state of emergency, the conditions from which this abnormal formation could arise: an anti-capitalist regime within a capitalist society. This had to lead to the most unsustainable of situations. It had to lead to the disappearance of either the anti-capitalist regime or capitalist production itself. As the latter was not yet possible, the former had to happen. The Jacobins' reign of terror only became possible because of the war and the fear

1 The 'foreign enemy' refers to the combined military might of monarchist Prussia and Austria. Their armies were advancing on Paris, but were forced to retreat at the famous Battle of Valmy in September 1792.

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of defeat. In and of itself, war is antagonistic to each and every mode of production and always demands measures which constrict the normal production process. A defeat would have brought even greater suffering than the war and the reign of terror did.

But, just as the external situation was different in 1848, the classes were different too. The soul of the movements of 1793 was formed by the Parisian petty bourgeoisie. The proletariat of the Parisian suburbs had vested the petty bourgeoisie with strength and boldness by standing behind it, driving it forwards and providing it with the most energetic and ruthless fighters. But the proletariat had not yet developed its own consciousness. It still thought, and perceived things, in a rather petty bourgeois manner, especially because the petty bourgeoisie still thought, and perceived things, in a revolutionary manner. The petty bourgeoisie recognised that the struggle against all ruling powers – both capitalist and feudal – were the means of its own uprising and liberation.

Since then, a number of decades of the most rapid capitalist development had taken place. This increasingly drove the petty bourgeois from a whole series of important branches of production and forced them back into others, driving them from production to sale and resale. While it once formed the basis of industry, the petty bourgeoisie had now become its parasitic appendage.

The petty bourgeoisie also increasingly lost its revolutionary strength and boldness, becoming more unreliable and floundering. At the same time, its connection with the proletariat loosened to the same extent that the proletariat had begun to develop its own consciousness and to set its own goals – goals which were opposed to petty bourgeois commodity production and the private ownership of the means of production. Thus a deep discord stretched between the two classes, which had once conquered the republic and which were seeking to revive the traditions of the revolution. Both of these forces learned something quite different from these traditions.

But the proletariat itself was no less split. A part of the proletariat, and a very large one at that, had not yet freed itself from petty-bourgeois ideas and sentiments, providing troops for the politicians of bourgeois radicalism just as it did in 1793.

Alongside this, however, a large part of the proletariat had already attained independent consciousness and independent goals in the form of *socialism*, which in the 1840s had started to outgrow its utopian stage. Back then socialism changed: once it had been a doctrine for bourgeois thinkers, which appealed to bourgeois philanthropists to provide the forces and the means to raise the proletariat and thereby abolish it. Now it had become a doctrine which was

seized upon by the proletariat in order to raise itself and search for the means and ways of liberating, and thereby abolishing, itself.

But, however clear and simple the proletariat's class position may be, however united its class struggle can be, the theories the proletariat took up were extremely diverse, as were the tendencies representing its socio-political aspirations. In 1848, it was possible to distinguish between three main tendencies in the French socialist movement, denoted by the names of Blanqui,[2] Proudhon[3] and Louis Blanc.[4]

The most elemental [*urwüchsig*][5] of them was the Blanquist tendency, which directly drew on Babeufism. In turn, Babeufism was nothing more than the continuation of Jacobinism translated from a petty-bourgeois outlook to a proletarian one. Just as the Jacobins conquered Paris through a series of popular uprisings, dominated the convention (parliament) and held the whole of France at bay through their tight organisation and the tremendous power of the Paris Commune, the Blanquists wanted to bring Paris under the sway of the proletariat through a series of proletarian uprisings, to dominate France via Paris and gradually to impose a socialist mode of production on the country. In these uprisings, the Parisian proletariat was to be led by a most centralised

2 Louis-Auguste Blanqui (1805–81).

3 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–65).

4 Louis Blanc (1811–82).

5 Most English-speaking readers will be familiar with the Russian translation of *urwüchsig*, as it appears in the famous Kautsky passage quoted by V.I. Lenin in his 1902 pamphlet *What is to be done?*: 'In this way, socialist awareness is something brought in to class struggle of the proletariat from without (*von Außen Hineingetragenes*) and not something that emerges from the class struggle in *stikhiinyi* [elemental fashion – *urwüchsig*]. Correspondingly, the old Hainfeld programme [of Austrian social democracy written by Victor Adler and endorsed by Kautsky in 1889] said with complete justice that the task of social democracy is bringing to the proletariat (literally: filling the proletariat up with) the *awareness* of its position and the awareness of its task' (quoted in Lih 2008, p. 710). *Urwüchsig* is often translated as 'elemental' or 'primitive'. This underlines how in this text Kautsky uses it to denote the working-class movement in its most elemental form: i.e., the immediate conflict between the worker and the boss. The above passage is as controversial as it is misrepresented. Numerous anarchists, syndicalists and modern-day Trotskyists see in this passage irrefutable proof of the 'elitism' of both Kautsky and Lenin and their distrust of the 'spontaneous' working-class movement. However, as can be seen in his discussion of French socialism here, the point Kautsky is making is that the working class must move beyond this to create a rounded world view if it is to emancipate itself. This is something which does not simply emerge from the conflict between boss and worker. It presupposes the proletariat organising itself in an independent political organisation, which aims at capturing state power and has a revolutionary outlook in respect of all classes in society as a whole – something in which, as Kautsky underlines, all of the tendencies of French socialism at the time were lacking.

organisation modelled on the Jacobin club. After achieving victory, this organisation was to direct the proletariat. Indeed, if such a thing was possible in 1793, why should it not be possible in 1848, now that the proletariat had become so much stronger?

Just like all politicians who sought to resume 1793 in 1848, the Blanquists too failed to recognise how the situation had changed since 1793. In many respects these changes were even more unfavourable to the proletarian Jacobins of 1848 than they were to the petty bourgeoisie.

As we have already mentioned, for all their anti-capitalism, the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie of 1793 had actually remained grounded in commodity production and private ownership of the means of production – at the time, the basis of the whole economic system. Capitalism was still in its infancy. It had become a social necessity, but the mass of the population still lived from petty production. The anti-capitalist tendencies of the Jacobins corresponded to their personal needs, even if they ran contrary to *social* needs – something which the individual was not directly conscious of.

In 1848, capitalism was perhaps no longer a universal social need. It could have perhaps already been replaced by social production in several regions and in several branches of production. But for the greater part of France's population, and even for a large part of those living in Paris, commodity production and private ownership of the means of production remained a personal need. Thus the proletarian Jacobins of 1848 stood in far greater opposition to the needs of the mass of the population than the petty bourgeois Jacobins of 1793 did. In order to assert their dictatorship, they would have had needed much greater instruments of power at their disposal than their predecessors.

However, the exact opposite was the case. Since 1793, power relations in France had shifted tremendously to Paris's disadvantage. One of the conditions of Jacobin rule was that in 1789 all the ruling class's means of rule – Church, bureaucracy and army – had been destroyed. The proletariat, as well as the petty bourgeoisie, will never be able to rule the state through these institutions. This is not only because the officer corps, the top of the bureaucracy and the Church have always been recruited from the upper classes and are joined to them by the most intimate links. It is in their very nature that these institutions of power strive to raise themselves above the mass of the people in order to rule them, instead of serving them, which means they will almost always be anti-democratic and aristocratic. The Jacobins sensed this so well that when the war forced on them the need to create an officer corps again, they placed every senior officer under the supervision of civil commissioners, because from the outset all of them were suspected of having aristocratic inclinations.

The conquest of state power by the proletariat therefore does not simply mean the conquest of the government ministries, which then, without further ado, administers the previous means of rule – an established state church, the bureaucracy and the officer corps – in a socialist manner. Rather, it means the dissolution of these institutions. As long as the proletariat is not strong enough to abolish these institutions of power, then taking over individual government departments and entire governments will be to no avail. A socialist ministry can at best exist temporarily. It will be worn down in the futile struggle against these institutions of power, without being able to create anything permanent.

In 1792, the Jacobins were in the favourable position of finding all these institutions dissolved. Using its enormous instruments of power and the Jacobin club, which was so superbly disciplined and organised throughout the country, Paris was able to deploy its full superiority. After 9 Thermidor, and especially under the empire, however, the bourgeoisie and the Empire had reconstructed and infinitely perfected the means of rule described above.

It is true, these institutions were strictly centralised and directed from Paris. As long as they remained in the possession of the Parisian government, France was governed from Paris. But as soon as Paris fell into the hands of a democratic regime, these means of rule immediately had to turn on this regime and thus on Paris itself. These institutions were also able to find a necessary central point outside Paris, as shown by the experience of 1871. Those centralised institutions then became the power which led the whole of France against Paris and which crushed it.

It is completely mistaken to presume – following the Jacobin tradition – that the centralisation of administration would allow a revolutionary Paris to rule France more easily than with an extensive self-government of the municipalities. Revolutionary Paris was dominant precisely when self-government of the municipalities was most highly developed. The centralism of the Jacobins controlled the federalism of the localities. The Girondists' attempt to mobilise the provinces against Paris at that time failed miserably. It was precisely *centralised* France which successfully carried out the Girondist plan[6] in 1848 and 1871.

This clearly points to the tasks of French socialism: the conquest of the provinces is as important as that of Paris. The dissolution and weakening of the centralised means of rule is to be promoted as much as possible – particularly through the expansion of local *self-government*, naturally on the basis of universal and equal suffrage. Many French socialists, of course, appear to be of

6 The Girondists sought to create a parliamentary monarchy. Thus the 'Girondist plan' of 1848 and 1871 refers to attempts to restore the monarchy.

a different opinion even today. They believe, for example, that the threat to the republic posed by the army's aristocratic tendencies can best be combated by increasing the police powers of the state, rather than by introducing the militia system.

Had Jacobin Blanquism conquered Paris, it would have encountered far greater difficulties in the face of these tremendously centralised institutions of power than its predecessors of 1793 did – despite the fact that their forces were significantly smaller. It was certain to fail eventually, just as its predecessors had. Nonetheless, Blanquism would actually have been able to establish a temporary socialist regime, which would not have been in vain. This is because no great revolutionary movement fails without leaving tremendous traces behind. These traces cannot be erased again – the failed movements provide powerful impulses, which continue to have an effect for decades, centuries even. The revolution of 1848, then, would have achieved more for the cause of the proletariat than merely sharpening proletarian class-consciousness and deepening class antagonisms through the battle of June.

But Blanquism could not deploy its full strength in 1848. When the revolution broke out, its organisations were weakened by the unsuccessful putsches of the previous decade. Its best leaders were in prison – above all Blanqui himself. And alongside Blanquism other tendencies had emerged, which captivated a large part of the proletariat.

One of these was the *Proudhonist* tendency. If Blanqui operated above all as a fighter, an organiser, then Proudhon was above all a theoretician – on occasion a dreamer too. He recognised the contradiction between the proletariat and capital as much as Blanqui did. But he occupied his mind with researching its economic laws far more than the latter did.

The experiences of 1793, however, had quite a different effect on him. Blanqui wanted to continue Jacobin policy in the interests of the proletariat, and one-sidedly pushed the need to conquer state power to the fore. Proudhon only saw the revolution's failure and became distrustful of revolutions and changes to the state, and eventually of the state itself. For him, the proletariat was to emancipate itself not by conquering the state, but by reshaping economic conditions. But if the proletariat wishes to emancipate itself through purely economic means, then these are necessarily petty means – means which can be obtained from its own funds. And they are also necessarily peaceful means which do not encounter any significant resistance from the ruling classes, because they do not appear dangerous.

In its practice, Proudhonism thus restricted itself to such means – to establishing insurance funds, exchange banks and cooperatives. Some of these, such as the exchange banks, were completely utopian. Others, such as insurance

funds and cooperatives, could be quite useful if they were applied alongside other, more powerful and more important means of the proletarian struggle for liberation. However, these means had directly harmful effects and thus became objectionable, because they were supposed to form the exclusive area of working-class activity, preventing the proletariat from using other means.

And limiting the struggle to these petty, peaceful means necessarily entailed limiting the final goal of the struggle itself, because small means could only achieve small ends. Fundamentally, the final goal could amount to nothing more than the abolition of capitalism and the emancipation of the proletariat through transforming it into a *petty bourgeois*. The final goal of Proudhonism was not the abolition of commodity production and its replacement by social production, but the formation of a new type of commodity production in which capitalist profit was to be abolished by suppressing money and intermediary trade.

Proudhon was decidedly hostile to social production and communism. He was both contemptuous of, and unsympathetic to, the revolution. Many of his ideas were quite petty bourgeois and thus in many cases reactionary, most clearly so on the women's question.[7] On 17 May 1846, he wrote to Marx:

> I believe we have no need of it [the revolution] in order to succeed; and that consequently we should not put forward revolutionary action as a means of social reform, because that pretended means would simply be an appeal to force, to arbitrariness: in brief, a contradiction. I myself put the problem in this way: to bring about the return to society, by an economic combination, of the wealth which was withdrawn from society by another economic combination.[8]

Discovering this combination appeared to him to be the main task of socialists, not conquering political power.

However, at the outbreak of revolution the third tendency of French socialism, that of Louis Blanc, had far more influence than that of Proudhon and Blanqui. Blanc recognised the profound contradiction between capital and the interests of the proletariat just as much as Proudhon and Blanqui. Like Blan-

7 It is unfortunate that Kautsky does not proceed to discuss Proudhon's flaws on the (so-called) women's question in any detail. Tony Cliff (Cliff 1984) provides some (non-referenced) quotes by Proudhon, such as this one: 'Genius … is virility of spirit and its accompanying powers of abstraction, generalisation, creation and conception; the child, the eunuch and the woman lack these gifts in equal measure'.

8 Proudhon 1846.

qui, but in complete contrast to Proudhon, he also recognised the significance of state power for economic life and for the transformation of society.

But in contrast to Blanqui he did not wish to set the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in the revolutionary struggle. He thought it was possible – and therein lies his historical distinctiveness – to convince the more noble and intelligent sections of the propertied classes of the necessity of socialism, because they suffered under capitalism and free competition no less than the proletariat. Louis Blanc envisaged the means of realising his socialism as consisting of a state authority standing above all classes, powered and enlightened by the best elements of the entire nation. His socialism, therefore, had to be a peaceful one, inimical to any idea of class struggle. He did not envisage the victory of the proletariat, but the victory of reason, which is the same for all classes. He aimed for social production, but not through the conquest of capital's means of power and the expropriation of the capitalist class. For him, the workers' cooperatives set up and supported by the state were to grow alongside the capitalist enterprises, gradually expanding more and more.

Above all, then, Louis Blanc counted on the good will of the bourgeoisie, which had to be convinced of socialism. If for Blanqui the sovereign means of liberating the proletariat was its *political organisation*, if for Proudhon it was its *economic organisation*, then for Louis Blanc it was the power of the *orators and literati* of socialism in stirring people's hearts.

He saw in beautifully spoken and written rhetoric the most important weapon of socialism – a weapon he himself deployed with virtuoso skill. And what is true of him is true of his successors. They are brilliant speakers and writers who regard the magic of their words as irresistible. In fact, without this belief their tendency would be inconceivable.

We can see that all three tendencies had their weaknesses. But the weakness of each and every one of them arose from the weakness of the proletariat itself. While the proletariat already felt the burning need to emancipate itself, it did not yet possess the strength to rule society. Each of the three tendencies sought a different path to make this emancipation possible, before the proletariat itself had gained sufficient strength to do so.

At the same time, each of these tendencies was caught up in the traditions of the Great Revolution, and this was the second aspect of their weakness. Blanquism drew directly on Jacobinism and its illusions. In contrast, it was the doldrums brought about by the failure of the illusions in the Great Revolution which were active in Proudhon. Louis Blanc, on the other hand, embodied those great memories, where revolutionary movements, in spite of the class differences which ultimately motivated them, appeared as purely human movements. They appeared to be the effects of the great ideas of freedom, equality

and fraternity – such as, for example, when during the night of 4 August 1789 feudal lords and Church dignitaries voluntarily abolished their own privileges. Of course, seen in the light of day, these privileges had actually already been smashed to smithereens by the outraged people, so that renouncing them was not too great a sacrifice.

While these three tendencies were best represented by the three people named above, they were not actually created by them. The tendencies arose from circumstances which are not *coincidental*, but *essential* to modern society, so that we still find all three tendencies in France today too – although they have long since been stripped of the special features which accorded them the above three protagonists, and each has adapted to modern conditions and completely changed in appearance. Indeed, this is not just true in France. Again and again we find these tendencies represented to a greater or lesser extent in the whole of the international socialist movement: one tendency which wants to liberate the proletariat by conquering political power in a struggle against the bourgeoisie; another which wants to do it by winning the good will of the state or a section of the bourgeoisie; and a third which wants to emancipate the proletariat behind the back of the state, through economic organisations and without much by way of politics. The vitality of these three tendencies is probably due to the fact that each of them represents a necessary aspect of the proletarian struggle for emancipation. That is also true, *cum grano salis* [with a pinch of salt], of Louis Blanc's tendency.

The proletariat cannot emancipate itself if it is not constituted as an independent political organisation which captures state power. But this cannot be the work of a coup by a small minority of the working class. It presupposes the slow and laborious, in many cases peaceful work of raising the mass of the proletariat economically, morally and intellectually, and here the development of its economic organisations is indispensable. And this cannot happen by ignoring the bourgeois state. The proletariat cannot place itself outside the state. It remains within it, and any change in the latter in turn has an impact on the proletariat's own development. It cannot, therefore, stand on the sidelines of the political struggles between the different bourgeois parties; it cannot regard the composition of legislation with indifference. It must actively engage in the former, supporting one side against the other. And it must attempt to wrest laws from the state which advance the proletariat's cause.

Thus, whilst each of the three tendencies has a healthy core, each of them made errors because of their isolation from the working-class movement as a whole. Today as well, therefore, every one-sided accentuation of one of the three aspects of the class struggle which ignores the others – political revolution, economic organisation, influencing legislation – must turn a truth into an

error and lead the proletariat astray, increasing its casualties and reducing its successes in battle. Yet, while the proletariat can only deploy its full strength when it remains conscious of all three aspects of its struggle for liberation, real conditions will at certain times give more prominence and success to one aspect of the struggle than the others.

The fact that one aspect of the struggle then comes more to the fore is not at all objectionable. As long as this does not lead to the other aspects being completely forgotten or even absolutely condemned, then it is highly beneficial to the cause of the proletariat. Because under different circumstances these other aspects can become much more effective and need to be kept in view if the accentuation of one aspect at one particular time is not to lead to one-sidedness. One-sidedness can only lead to illusions, followed by disappointments.

During times of political revolution, it was the conquering of political power which had to be pushed to the fore by the advanced fighters of the proletariat. Blanquism best corresponded to the needs of the situation back then. The proletariat could gain most from the situation by energetically and unitedly entrusting itself to the Blanquist leadership.

But we have already pointed out that the Blanquist organisations were weakened and their leaders were in prison. And this particular aspect of the proletarian struggle, the conquering of political power, was precisely the one that required a unified political organisation and recognised leaders. The time of political revolution was, of course, not very propitious to Proudhon's economic prescriptions. Louis Blanc, on the other hand, became the man of the hour. His illusions corresponded to the lack of class-consciousness among the majority of the proletarian mass. But he also presided over the press: that great weapon with which modern politicians most influence, indeed control, the unorganised masses.

Louis Blanc's illusions in the cooperation of the classes always found the most fertile soil in *journalistic circles*. The journalist is exploited by capital and degraded as one of its wage workers. However, he often originates from bourgeois circles and is incorporated into the bourgeois milieu through personal relationships, interests and goals. Literally and politically, the journalist reproduces the intermediate position between bourgeoisie and proletariat, which the petty bourgeois occupies economically. He easily develops proletarian sympathies, but looks for a way of asserting them without breaking with the bourgeoisie. Every one of us 'academics' in the socialist movement has probably been through this stage – even those who have now come to emphasise the proletariat's class point of view most sharply. Many remain stuck in that stage for life.

The journalist who makes 'public opinion' through his editorials is also most easily seduced by the illusion that he is able to overcome class contradictions through spoken or written editorials, or that he is able to convince the different classes to work together.

While the spontaneous proletarian movement always oscillates between the two extremes of political revolution and economic organisation of the working class (something which in 1848 took the forms of Blanquism and Proudhonism), the literati socialist always tends towards cooperation of the classes, as represented by Louis Blanc in 1848.

The less organised, the less politically educated the proletariat is, the more it will be controlled by the press. And in February 1848, with the exception of a few secret clubs, the Parisian proletariat possessed no organisation at all. *La Réforme*, founded in 1848 and edited by Louis Blanc in association with petty-bourgeois/socialist democrats, was a force amongst the revolutionary masses at that time.

The fact that it was Louis Blanc and not Blanquism that influenced the composition of the provisional government was a reflection of the lack of independent organisation and class-consciousness of the Parisian proletariat. This was also true of the fact that the government was not a socialist government, but a bourgeois one in which two socialists, *Louis Blanc and Albert*,[9] were condemned to impotence from the outset. Their presence was not a proletarian outpost in enemy territory, but protected the bourgeois government from the proletariat.

Jaurès wrote in *Cosmopolis*[10] that it was a great misfortune that with Blanc's participation in government, 'socialism appeared to be in power without possessing it. Socialism was represented in the provisional government, in which bourgeois views prevailed; a semblance of power, through which socialism overexcited the fears of the capitalists, without possessing the power to get rid of capitalism'.[11] The strength which the proletariat developed in the February days was not enough to overthrow the bourgeois regime, but it was enough to make the existence of the monarchy impossible – and thus to replace it with the republic.

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9 Here, Kautsky is referring to Alexandre Matin, who was commonly known as *Albert l'Ouvrier* ('Albert the worker') due to his background as a machinist in a button factory. Matin, who was closely associated with Louis Blanc, soon lost faith in the provisional government and subsequently led an uprising against it with Auguste Blanqui. Matin was arrested and jailed for four years on charges of treason.

10 An international journal founded by Fernand Ortmans in 1896.

11 Quoted by Bure in *La Vie Socialiste*, second issue, p. 125.

While it forced the republic into existence, the proletariat achieved nothing more than to impose on the bourgeoisie the task of transforming the republic – considered by the proletariat as the tool of its emancipation and embraced as a 'social' republic – into a tool of bourgeois class rule. It forced the bourgeoisie to reign over the proletariat itself – an unpleasant task, which the bourgeoisie had previously left to the monarchy.

However, the significance acquired by the proletariat in the republic induced in the bourgeoisie a hatred against the working masses, which it had not known under the monarchy. If under the monarchy the bourgeoisie gladly used the proletariat to intimidate the government and to make it compliant, it now pushed the government to put an end to the new power, which was rising up so threateningly alongside it. If necessary, this should be done quickly, with terror. While the workers led by Louis Blanc dreamed of solving the social question through a social republic, which would alleviate all class differences and lead to the cooperation of the classes, the bourgeois republic was preparing for a horrific class conflict, the likes of which had not been seen in the nineteenth century.

Above all, the new government saw it as its task to get a 'reliable' military power to Paris to disarm the proletariat, which had acquired weapons in the February days. This led to the disaster of the June days, to the bloody suppression of the proletariat. And now everything that the proletariat had seized by defeating the monarchy was taken back from it by the victorious republic. Its press was suppressed and its clubs were disbanded. The National Guard, which had been made accessible to all classes, was once again restricted to the bourgeoisie. And when, in spite of the June defeat, the elections saw socialists enter the national assembly, universal suffrage was abolished.

The right to vote was now tied to a residency of three years. Moreover, police fines, even violations of the laws of association and similar trifles, were sufficient to entail the loss of the right to vote. This is how the bourgeoisie succeeded in completely containing the crushed proletariat. But in doing so it eliminated a buttress of the republic – a buttress which the republic had even more need of in 1848 than it did after 1793. At the time of the Convention, the petty bourgeoisie had still been energetic and strong. Fifty years on, it had become unstable and timid. Yet the bourgeoisie still viewed the republic with suspicion, hostility even. The army brought them assurance. But the bourgeoisie also submitted itself to the regime of the army's trusted man, Napoleon III.[12] It was just

12 Napoleon III (Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte, 1808–73) was nephew of Napoleon I. He was president of the Second Republic and then emperor of the Second Empire from 1852–70. As president of the Second Republic he spent much of this time consolidating power

as necessary that the Second Empire would follow the battle of June, as the First Empire had followed 9 Thermidor.

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and staffing the government administration with his supporters. But the constitution stipulated that the President had only a four-year term, and Bonaparte sought to change this. However, he was unable to get the majority he needed, so on 2 December 1852, before his presidency expired, Louis Bonaparte staged a coup to overthrow the government and install himself as emperor.

CHAPTER 5

The Second Empire and the Paris Commune

One of the first acts of the Empire was to try to reconcile the working class, which the bourgeois republic had estranged. Under Louis Philippe,[1] the number of voters for the second chamber had been very limited – there were only 300,000 in total. The revolution suddenly caused this to swell to around nine million. The electoral law of 31 May 1850 then reduced it by three million again. The constitution of 14 January 1852 restored universal suffrage, which has existed to this day in France.

But the proletariat did not allow itself to be bought off by this. Its opposition to the Empire remained intransigent. It remained faithful to the republic, even when the empire made further political concessions in addition to universal suffrage from 1860 on, expanding the parliament's powers and dealing with the press, clubs and meetings in a more liberal fashion.

The bourgeoisie came to terms with the Empire more easily, even though this meant restricting the parliament, which was condemned to utter impotence. This hit its chosen means of rule, the political institution which most closely corresponds to bourgeois class interests, the hardest. But the empire brought about protection of property from communism, as well as an economic boom. And this is a spell which the bourgeoisie has never been able to resist.

The decades following the February Revolution[2] were the golden age of industrial capitalism in England and France. As Gladstone[3] put it, it was the period of the 'intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power'. The Empire had not created this, but it profited from it and won the bourgeoisie's recognition. But, just like in England, in France this 'intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power' was almost entirely restricted to the capitalist class (including the large estates). The working classes' share of this was small, imperceptible; for wide layers of working people this development even expressed

1 Louis Philippe I (1773–1850) was King from 1830 to 1848. He spent 21 years in exile following the French Revolution, mainly in the USA. He was proclaimed King after Charles X was forced to abdicate. When, in 1848, he was forced to abdicate the throne, he again went into exile – this time to England.

2 This refers to the revolution of February 1848 in France, which ended the Orléans monarchy and created the French Second Republic.

3 William Ewart Gladstone (1809–98) was a British Liberal who served as prime minister four times. As chancellor of the exchequer in 1860, he presided over the Cobden-Chevalier treaty, which reduced trade tariffs between France and Britain.

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itself in a direct depression of their living standards, so that their opposition to the capitalist class grew and grew, as did their opposition to the ruling regime.

But, if the days after the February Revolution had been particularly favourable to the tendencies of Louis Blanc, now Proudhonism came to the fore. Louis Blanc's illusions had been drowned in the blood of June for a long time to come. But this defeat had also paralysed the power to engage in a political rebellion along the lines of Blanqui. The bulk of the socialist working class despaired of politics, believed political activity to be as futile as it was corrupting, and predominantly turned to the advancement of peaceful economic organisations.

When the International[4] emerged in the middle of the 1860s, the Proudhonists were also predominant in its French section. But, the more it grew in strength, the more it was persecuted; the more the opposition against the empire grew, the more the French section of the International went from the society of peaceful social studies and experiments it initially was to a fighting organisation. With this, it increasingly lost its original Proudhonist character. From 1868 other elements arose alongside the Proudhonists: Blanquists and Bakuninists. Bakunin, who had escaped from Siberian exile in 1860, exaggerated both Proudhon's distrust of the state and the Blanquists' putschism, uniting these two extremes into a mixture very much to the taste of the declassed intellectuals in the Romance countries.

Besides these, however, a new tendency began to emerge in the International: Marxism, which in this context can be viewed as the synthesis of all the viable seeds contained within the three tendencies of French socialism. Like Blanquism, it recognised the necessity of conquering political power as an indispensable precondition for the emancipation of the proletariat. But Marxism was clear that the methods of 1793 were not suitable for this, that the proletariat could no longer be victorious by organising a small number of conspirators, but only by organising itself in an independent political party of the majority of the people. But in addition it also understood that the

4 The International Workingmen's Association, or First International, was established in 1864 and disbanded in 1876. Seeing that its creation represented a real step forward for the working-class movement, Marx and Engels threw their weight into the organisation and its work. However, they did not actually set up the organisation, but were invited to join. According to August Nimtz, 'Marx had turned down apparently similar invitations' in the preceding years. What made this one different, and made it worth entering despite the dubious politics of many who were involved, was that it contained real working-class forces. As Marx wrote to Engels, 'I knew on this occasion "people who really count" were appearing, both from London and from Paris' (Nimtz Jr. 2008, p. 179).

seizure of state power was tied to a series of moral and material preconditions, which not only demanded the political organisation of the proletariat, but its economic organisation as well. This economic organisation should not develop behind the backs of the ruling powers, but in the struggle against them.

Marxism substituted the organisation of the economic struggle – the strike organisation, the *union* – for the peaceful economic organisations of petty-bourgeois Proudhonism such as insurance institutions, exchange and credit banks, cooperatives, etc. At the same time, it also recognised the need to use the available political means to wrest as much as possible from the contemporary state, to carry out measures through the bourgeois state in favour of the workers. But unlike Louis Blanc it did not expect from the capitalist state the means to build a new, cooperative, anti-capitalist mode of production, but a means to protect labour-power, that commodity in whose largest possible use-value capitalist society is always most actively interested. It did not demand from the state that it subsidise workers' cooperatives, but that it concede a normal working day and similar measures of worker protection.

As I have already said, this reasoning signified a synthesis of the viable seeds of all three tendencies of French socialism. But it was too much at odds with the revolutionary traditions of France and the traditions of each and every one of these tendencies. It was only assimilated by a few members of the French section of the International. These few were, of course, its best members. Incidentally, Marxism went through a similar experience in the other sections of the International. In the International, Marx did not merely seek to organise the Marxists. Just as in theoretical terms his politics were themselves a synthesis of all the viable seeds of the various proletarian movements, he also wanted to fashion their practical application into an organisational synthesis of these movements in a united class struggle.

The International was open to all: Proudhonists and Blanquists, British trade unionists and German social democrats. Albeit with great effort and difficulty, Marx initially succeeded in keeping together these various elements. But eventually each of these tendencies again sought to go its own particular way to the exclusion of the others. In the name of freedom of expression and tolerance, they were up in arms against the 'intolerant' Karl Marx, the one who had wanted to unite them all. And so that each tendency could one-sidedly restrict itself to its own specialised hobby, they rebelled against the 'narrow and one-sided dogmatism' of Marxism, which had given voice to their various concerns within the framework of a comprehensive theory. This, however, only happened after the fall of the Paris Commune, which had risen on the ruins of the Empire.

TABLE 1 State revenue (millions of francs)

Types of tax		1847	1870
A.	Direct taxation	331.7	332.8
B.	Transaction taxes (stamps, transportation, transfer duties)	253.8	446.5
C.	Indirect taxation		
	Customs	160.3	75.1
	Salt	70.7	31.8
	Beverages	102	243.4
	Domestic sugar	19.3	111.8
	Tobacco monopoly	112.5	246.8
	Total	464.8	708.9
D.	Remaining small taxes	48	54.8
Total (A–D)		**1098.3**	**1543**

The Military Empire

Before its internal opponents had become strong enough to overthrow it, the Empire succumbed to its foreign policy. This policy had to be geopolitics [*Weltpolitik*] in order to impress its own bourgeoisie – to ensure that, even while he was condemned to political impotence at home, abroad the French bourgeois would be marvelled at, as the citizen of a great nation. Of course, geopolitics necessarily became military policy. But these policies were also necessary for the Empire to keep the army busy and happy. The Empire rested on the army's shoulders.

However, wars cost money – lots of money. Where to get this from? Perhaps through frugality in other areas of government spending? But Napoleon and his men were a gang of adventurers who had conquered the state not in order to use it for the realisation of a social idea or to bring a certain class to power, but to plunder it. The most shameless waste coursed through the court and the upper civil service.

Thus the only remaining way of satisfying the financial demands of war policy was to increase taxes. But the regime, volatile and weak as it was, was scared of this, constantly scrambling for cheap popularity. It was frivolous and unscrupulous enough to plunge the country into military adventures, but not strong and bold enough to burden the country with the consequences by raising taxes accordingly.

TABLE 2 French debt (millions of francs)

	Capital	Interest
1 January 1852	5.516	239
1 January 1871	12.454	386

'The Second Empire', writes Adolf Wagner,[5] 'was always – even at its height – anxious about and dependent upon not stirring up the population through unpopular tax policy'.[6] The revenue from direct taxation therefore remained essentially the same as it was at the end of the July Monarchy.[7] With the other taxes they sought to change as little as possible. In many cases the increase in revenue resulted not from an increase in tax, but from the increase in the population and the 'intoxicating augmentation of wealth'. This was particularly true in the case of the increased revenue from transaction taxes.

Thus tobacco, sugar and alcohol had to 'bleed'. But in return the taxes on salt – already cut under the Second Republic – were reduced, along with customs duties. However, because the receipts increased nowhere near as much as expenditure, the natural consequences were necessary deficits, debt and the breakdown of state finances.

The increase is thus enormous. Nonetheless, given the general corruption of the state administration, the borrowed billions were not sufficient to meet the demands of the army. The army was less and less up to its tasks. Of course, this is not an argument in favour of firmly cranking up taxes, but one in favour of eschewing any adventures in geopolitics.

As long as France was only up against equally corrupt and bankrupt powers such as Russia, Austria and China, it emerged victorious. But the Empire failed as soon as it confronted countries such as the USA and Germany, which back then were at the beginning of their rise to the status of leading world powers. In the face of US threats, Napoleon III withdrew from his Mexican adventure[8] without a fight.

5 Adolf Wagner (1835–1917) was a *Kathedersozialist* economist and adherent of the theory that the state is able – and ought – to neutralise social injustice and class conflict through social legislation. He was an early member of the Christian Social Party of Workers, which later became the Christian Social Party. Wagner's Law of increasing state involvement is named after him. A leading monarchist politician, he was also a key figure of the anti-Semitic 'Conservative Central Committee'.

6 Wagner n.d., p. 394.

7 The term 'July monarchy' refers to 1830–48, when Louis Philippe I was on the throne.

8 Napoleon III sought to reassert French influence in Europe and beyond. Among other things,

The Third Republic

In his conflict with Germany a few years later, Napoleon III became the prisoner of victorious Germany after a few quick blows. With this, the Third French Republic was created. This time, this ripe fruit fell into the lap of the people without any exertion at all.

Today, due to the existence of modern mass armies on the one hand and the modern mass proletariat on the other, a capitalist state can no longer fend off a foreign invasion without arming the proletariat. Under the impression of the first military defeats, the bourgeois republicans had demanded an expansion of the National Guard in the chamber of the old Empire. In the Empire, the National Guard had become the meaningless gimmick of a few select bourgeois circles. All citizens of full age were to be armed – 'as long as they have been living in the community for at least a year'. This nonetheless signified a manner of arming the people, which included numerous proletarians.

It was a most democratic measure when one comes to think that the new battalions of the National Guard were conceded the right to choose their officers and non-commissioned officers themselves. It was their fear of the victorious Germans, and even more so of the outraged Parisians, which on 11 August forced the reactionaries in the chamber to accept this proposal of the Radicals. But when the Empire collapsed and the people of France again became the master of their own destiny, the bourgeoisie was seized by an even greater fear: that of the battalions of the Paris National Guard.

Of course, in the hours of the Commune's distress the proletariat did not think about its specific class interests. It unhesitatingly put up with the fact that the bourgeois republicans in the chamber simply formed a centrist government, without consulting any proletarian elements.[9]

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this saw wars against Austria (1859), Russia in the Crimean war, and intervention in Mexico in 1861. French troops were withdrawn by 1867.

9 (Kautsky's footnote): Here I would like to confront a misconception surrounding a claim I made in the Amsterdam tactical commission. I explained that, among the predicaments in which a socialist may enter into a bourgeois government, I count 'situations like, for example, that after 4 September 1870 in France, when demands came from socialists that a socialist like Blanqui or Deleseluze ought to join the government, which had the aim of organising national defence'. Jaurès thinks that if for the defence of the fatherland I am accepting something which I reject for the defence of the republic then I am countering his republican ministerialism with a far worse 'nationalist ministerialism'. This same reasoning is repeated by Pressensé in his article on the Amsterdam Congress in the first issue of *La Vie Socialiste*.

In fact, nowhere did I mention that the defence of the fatherland justified a socialist joining the government *per se*; this would mean that the Russo-Japanese war would eventually force our Russian comrades to support the tsar's government. I spoke of 'situations, like that

On the other hand, the bourgeois leaders of the new republic were from the outset paralysed in defending the country by their fear of the armed Parisian proletarians. The defence of Paris suffered just as much from the their attempt not to allow the National Guard to become too powerful, or even to achieve victory, as it did from the arms of the besiegers. This time around, the arming of the people, the *levée en masse* from which miracles were expected, had quite a different effect than it did in the Great Revolution.

In 1793, the great mass of the people consisted of peasants and petty bourgeois. The class contradiction between capitalists and proletarians was still weakly developed and pushed into the background by the great common opposition of all these classes to the aristocracy, which was allied with the foreign enemy. Back then, the arming of the people had signified the highest military power of the nation. In 1870, the class antagonism between capital and labour already dominated the whole of France. Here the capitalist class was presented with much less of a threat from the enemy without. Whereas this enemy would weaken it financially and restrict its domestic market, the enemy within threatened the foundations of its very existence.

The situation was thus quite different to that of 1793. The revival of the revolutionary traditions, the belief in being able to drive out the enemy abroad through the *levée en masse*, was therefore illusory. It was precisely the arming of the people which paralysed the country in defending its key point, Paris, by severing those defending it into two hostile camps.

Finally, on 29 January, there was a ceasefire which was to initiate peace. In order to conclude this peace, a National Assembly was elected by universal suffrage on 8 February. The elections resulted in a large majority for the reactionaries – 450 of the 750 deputies were monarchists. If the proletariat and the proletarian parties were the most determined advocates of the republic,

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after 4 September 1870 in France'. Back then it was not simply a matter of defending a country against foreign invasion, but also of defending a democratic republic against an enemy which wanted to maim and weaken it, to force the hated usurper onto it. It was a situation where all liberal-minded elements of the whole civilised world, including German Social Democracy but not German liberalism, took the side of France.

If in 1899 the republic had been just as much at threat as in 1870, and if back then the government participation of socialists had increased the forces defending the republic, then in such a predicament – solely for the purposes of defending the republic and only for the duration of its defence – Millerand's participation in a bourgeois administration would have been justified. However, it has never been demonstrated that this was the case. And a bourgeois administration was a far cry from an administration of general Gallifet. The inclusion of this man in the government was an insult to the socialists. But rescuing the republic cannot be initiated by insulting its staunchest defenders.

and also in favour of continuing the war, then the peasant and the bourgeois alike cursed it. The former particularly did so because it ruined him. The latter did so because the war entailed the arming of the people and increasingly brought the armed proletariat to the fore. It cursed the republic, along with the war.

The reactionary composition of the assembly arose far more from the desire for peace and the hatred of revolutionary republican Paris than from monarchist sentiments. The clerical-royalist country squires were also welcomed by the liberal-bourgeois republicans as angels of peace. In equal measure, they were welcomed as opponents of Paris, whose revolutionary proletariat terrified all of them. When it came to weakening Paris and humiliating it, republicans and monarchists worked together in the national assembly. This is something which must be established in the face of the current attempts of the revisionists to shift the blame for the battle against the Paris Commune and for the battle of June in 1848 from the bourgeois republicans entirely onto the clerical monarchists.

It was not a member of the latter tendency who became head of the executive power of the republic. It was Thiers,[10] who to this day is admired by the French bourgeois republicans as their great man. And at the time of the Commune, radical republicans such as Jules Favre,[11] Picard[12] and J. Simon[13] were members of this government. From the outset, the hatred against Paris dominated the national assembly. Its delegates were verbally abused. Paris itself was divested of its status as the capital of France by the order of 10 March, which made Versailles the seat of the government and the national assembly. This again had the petty bourgeoisie of Paris up in arms against the assembly, driving it into the ranks of the revolutionary elements.

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10 Adolphe Thiers (1797–1877) was Prime Minister under King Louis-Philippe of France. Following the overthrow of the Second Empire, he came to prominence as the French leader who suppressed the Paris Commune. From 1871 to 1873 he held the presidential post of head of state.

11 Jules Favre (1809–80) was Vice-President of the Government of National Defence under General Trochu and Minister of Foreign Affairs, tasked with negotiating peace with Germany.

12 Ernest Picard (1821–77) held the portfolio of finance in the Government of National Defence. In January 1871 he accompanied Jules Favre to Versailles to negotiate the capitulation of the Paris Commune, and in the next month he became minister of the interior in Adolphe Thiers's cabinet.

13 Jules François Simon (1814–96) was Education Minister in the government of Thiers. He became French president in 1876.

Civil War

This contradiction became increasingly trenchant, ultimately breaking out into open civil war when Thiers consigned a few regiments to steal the Parisian National Guard's cannons in the early hours of 18 March – a move he hoped would initiate the disarmament of Paris. The attempt was detected and thwarted. But with this war was declared. From the defence of the Parisian proletariat's weapons ensued that violent war which both initiated and toppled the first modern proletarian regime. It was initially a struggle for the National Guard, in which the proletariat was victorious in Paris. On 26 March, it then gave itself its own government in the Commune.

Unfortunately, it was not a united one: within it, we again find the three directions of French socialism present. Alongside the Proudhonists were the Blanquists. Alongside these there was a third tendency, admittedly no longer a theoretically based one such as that represented by Louis Blanc, but a mere petty-bourgeois and proletarian mishmash – devoid of any particular programme, but boasting a good deal of passion and drive. Above all, this tendency was steeped in the traditions of the Great Revolution.

At this point, Louis Blanc himself was no longer to be found in Paris. Paris may have elected him as a deputy to the national assembly, but when the assembly declared war on Paris, he remained in Versailles and supported the government in its fight against the Commune. His illusory belief that the proletariat had to collaborate with the most advanced and noble parts of the bourgeoisie in order to liberate itself culminated in his collaboration with the most backward and brutal elements of the country squires in order to defeat it. In doing so his theoretical views and sympathies had hardly changed. But class divisions were stronger than his pious wishes. Anybody who, coming over from the side of the bourgeoisie, does not possess the courage and abjuration to join the fighting proletariat against the bourgeoisie wholeheartedly and break all ties with it can eventually, notwithstanding his proletarian sympathies, all too easily be pushed onto the side of the proletariat's opponents at the decisive moment.

As bad as the theoretical fragmentation and ignorance of the Parisian proletariat was, it was not so much damaged by this as it was by its lack of a uniform organisation. This was indeed partly caused by theoretical disjointedness and partly by the absence of the right to association and assembly, which had rendered the creation of any proletarian mass organisation impossible since 1794. We shall return to the latter point further on.

Proletarian Rule

However, notwithstanding its theoretical ignorance and organisational fragmentation, the Parisian proletariat achieved amazing things in the organisation of economic and social life. It came upon one of the most difficult situations: the misery of the siege which had left Paris completely exposed followed the mismanagement and bankruptcy of the Empire. Circumstances forced on the proletariat the administration of this enormous, completely ruined area without any preparation at all. During a war, and in the face of the betrayal of the previous administration, it had to build up a new administration with new forces in an instant. Despite everything, it was most successful in this task. Paris had never been administered as well as during the Commune.

We may hold up this example to those faint-hearted in our ranks, who fear nothing more than our victory, and consider it their main task to convince the world that for a long time to come the conquest of political power by our party will necessarily mean chaos and the bankruptcy of our party. If a generation ago the proletariat of Paris – completely undeveloped and operating under the most trying circumstances – proved up to its social tasks, then today we may look forward to our victory with the most joyous expectation.

Where the Commune utterly failed, however, was in military affairs and politics. In these matters, it completely lost its way. While it could doubtless boast some serious, capable men in these areas too, their effectiveness was more than paralysed by vain dandies, bawlers and do-nothings who stayed away from organisational and administrative work, preferring those aspects of work where one could feign greatness with sabre-rattling and rhetoric. Above all, however, it was here in particular that the disjointed character of the Commune had the most severe consequences.

Whatever the individual socialists' theoretical quirks may have been, when they were faced with the practical work of socio-political organisation, their instincts led them to unite quickly around what was necessary and work out what the most indispensable tasks were, even if this ran contrary to their outdated theories.

Things were different when it came to the *military* and *political* struggle against the enemy. It became apparent that the modern mode of production and its elemental [*urwüchsig*] social struggles might by themselves develop the proletariat's capacity for social and political organisation, but not the higher art of war and high politics. We can easily appreciate the absence of the former.

On the other hand, political education can actually be more easily accessed by the proletariat than military training. But political education was also lacking among the Parisian workers in 1871. Such education requires knowledge not

only of one's own needs and strengths, but also those of the enemy. But this can only be attained by detailed study or extensive political practice. The proletarians of 1871 lacked both. Extensive participation in parliamentary work provides the best school for the political struggle against the bourgeoisie, but neither the Proudhonists nor Blanquists had participated in the parliamentary struggle, and the petty-bourgeois radical 'sentimental socialists' *à la* Rochefort[14] were generally incapable of learning anything politically.

The little bit of political insight which all of these tendencies were able to develop was obscured by the traditions of the Great Revolution. They were still guided by these traditions and failed to realise that the situation had completely changed.

Rapid, uniform and consistent action was needed if Paris were to be victorious against the forces of the whole of France, deployed by the central government of Versailles – or rather, if Paris were to paralyse this government and win so many of the country's forces over to its side that it could attain a settlement securing the democratic republic and the proletariat's political and military ability to put up a fight. But this rapid and uniform action was impossible. For Paris had not sought the war: rather it was surprised by it. And there was no single political organisation with specific goals which could have led the Commune politically and militarily.

Manifold organisations whirled around – each with different goals and different tactics. They took the political and military leadership of the Commune in a different direction with each day that passed. One day would see an aggressive stance. The next would see this aggression countered with peaceful mediation. The roar of cannons the day after would then undermine this newly initiated mediation before it had brought any results.

Whereas the proletariat did not quite know what to expect from the bourgeoisie and how it could best deal with it, the government was determined from the outset to suppress and decimate the armed proletariat at all costs. And in this endeavour it met with the unanimous approval of the National Assembly – including its far left. Even though the proletariat's capability for social organisation and administration manifested itself most brilliantly, the politically disjointed Commune succumbed to this unity and confidence of bourgeois politics and warfare.

Since then, the supremacy of bourgeois politics has come to an end. Three decades of parliamentary struggles have sufficiently acquainted the proletariat with bourgeois politics. The military superiority of modern rulers, on the other

14 Victori Henri Rochefort (1830–1913) was a republican journalist and politician.

hand, only lasts as long as the army remains its submissive tool. With an unreliable army, even the greatest general cannot be victorious.

To set out the political ideal of the Commune is not so easy, since various different tendencies clashed within it. But fundamentally all the practical demands and organisational efforts of the Commune arose from the same type of democratic republic that had already been established by the Great Revolution.

Marx on the Commune

There is no better way for me to describe the constitution initiated by the Commune than by repeating Marx's classical description in his declaration on the Civil War in France. He says:

> Paris could resist only because, in consequence of the siege, it had got rid of the army, and replaced it by a National Guard, the bulk of which consisted of working men. This fact was now to be transformed into an institution. The first decree of the Commune, therefore, was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people.
>
> The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class. The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body – executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of continuing to be the agent of the central government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible, and at all times revocable, agent of the Commune.
>
> So were the officials of all other branches of the administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, public service had to be done at a workman's wage.[15] The acquired interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared, along with the dignitaries themselves. Public functions ceased to be the private property of the tools of the central government. Not only municipal administration, but the whole initiative hitherto exercised by the state was laid into the hands of the Commune.

15 (Kautsky's footnote): 'The biggest salary was 6,000 francs'.

Having once got rid of the standing army and the police – the physical-force elements of the old government – the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the 'parson-power', by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of church and state.

Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it. The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subservience to all succeeding governments, to which, in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible, and revocable.

The Paris Commune was, of course, to serve as a model to all the great industrial centres of France. The communal regime once established in Paris and the secondary centres, the old, centralised government would in the provinces too have to give way to the self-government of the producers. In a rough sketch of national organisation, which the Commune had no time to develop, it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet, and that in the rural districts the standing army was to be replaced by a national militia, with an extremely short term of service. The rural communities of every district were to administer their common affairs by an assembly of delegates in the central town, and these district assemblies were again to send deputies to the national delegation in Paris, each delegate to be at any time revocable and bound by the *mandat imperatif* (formal instructions) of his constituents. The few but important functions which would still remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally misstated, but were to be discharged by communal and thereafter responsible agents.

The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organised by a communal constitution, and to become a reality by the destruction of the state power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity, independent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate func-

> tions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society.[16]

Thus the ideal of the democratic republic was created, which the Parisian proletariat of 1871 would seek to form into an instrument of its emancipation.

16 Marx 1871.

CHAPTER 6

The Constitution of the Third Republic

After the 'bloody week' of May 1871, it seemed as if things were going to follow the same course that they did after 9 Thermidor in 1795 and in 1848 after the battle of June. After the proletariat had been butchered, the ground was once again cleared for the monarchy.

If this time around the monarchy was not re-established, this was above all down to the pretenders to the throne. If two pretenders fight over the throne, the idea of the monarchy suffers tremendously. Even the fight for the regency of Schaumburg-Lippe in such a piously monarchist nursery as Germany has shown us that. How very different the effects the three pretenders tussling over the throne had to be on a country such as France, which was so accustomed to its lack of respect for the monarchy. But when the Orléans and the Bourbons finally arrived at what was at least a temporary agreement, with the former renouncing its entitlement in favour of the Count of Chambord,[1] it turned out that Chambord was an impotent idiot. While a purple-born prince may possess every possible mental and physical deficiency and still be able to wear the crown, somebody who wishes to *conquer* the throne must possess at least the grout and cockiness of a lucky adventurer, otherwise he will not be able to be imposed on the country, not even by a monarchist parliament.

Thus, in the absence of a pretender to the throne who was more or less reputable and acceptable to all monarchist elements, the national assembly had to forego the pleasure of the monarchy. Yet if it was not able to produce this delectable good for real, then in its stead it placed a surrogate, which yielded little to the real thing. In 1848, the German 'small staters'[2] were mocked for wanting a republic with the Grand Duke at its head. The squires of the 'untraceable chamber' recreated the Empire with a president of the republic at its head.

The First Republic was wary of placing an individual at the head of the state. Even the Second Republic only felt the need to consolidate all executive power in a single pair of hands after the battle of June. From the outset, however, the

1 Henri of Artois, Count of Chambord (1820–83) was the disputed monarch of France from 2–9 August 1830 as Henry V, although this was never officially proclaimed as such. Afterwards, he was the legitimist pretender to the French throne from 1844–83.

2 Proponents of German unification on the basis of all German-speaking statelets but to the exclusion of Austria. This solution was mainly put forward by the increasingly powerful Kingdom of Prussia.

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National Assembly of the Third Republic believed that it could not do without what S. Brie describes as a 'unitarily centralised executive authority which was suited for energetic action'.[3] Obviously, this was to allow for more vigorous suppression of the proletariat. Immediately after the assembly met in February 1871, it elected Thiers 'head of the executive power'. Then the constitution of 1875 not only made the institution of the presidency a permanent one. In determining the powers of the President, it went far beyond those accepted by the reactionary chamber of 1843.

In the constitution of 4 November 1848, the President was elected for four years. Now the President's term of office was seven years. In 1848, he was refused supreme command over the army. In 1875, he was granted it. In the Second Republic, the President of the National Assembly was responsible for administering his office. He no longer is – now his ministers are responsible for it. In 1848, the chamber was permanent and could not be adjourned or dissolved. Today, he can adjourn the chamber as he sees fit, and can dissolve it with the approval of the Senate. In 1848, all treaties required the approval of the National Assembly. Today, with certain exceptions such as trade agreements, the President can conclude treaties of which he only needs to inform the chamber when 'the interests and security of the state permit'. He may, therefore, conclude alliances with other countries which pledge the military support of his country without the country having to interfere in such decisions, or without even learning more precise details. Note the famous alliance with Russia, under which France can be rushed into a devastating war at any moment. This alliance was concluded without any questions being asked and without the population being informed of the content of this alliance. Only recently did the Paris correspondent of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*[4] report on the treaty between France and Spain over Morocco:

> As if mocking them, the minister merely answered the respective questions of the oppositional deputies Denis Cochin and Charles Benoist by literally repeating the sibylline formulations of the Franco-Spanish

3 Brie 1893, p. 23.

4 The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* was a social-democratic daily newspaper which first appeared in 1894 and which was distributed for free. The newspaper became closely associated with the radical left of the SPD, with figures such as Franz Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg and – before his shift to the extreme right of the party – Paul Lensch working for its editorial board. In 1917 the publication was handed over to the Independent Social Democrats. The publication continued to exist in the German Democratic Republic and has continued through to this day. It is now partly owned by the infamous Springer publishing house.

> declaration which had already been made public. However, at least in reactionary Spain the party leader has been made aware of the treaty's content. But there is more. The British government is aware of the treaty's content. In France, however, the representatives of the people are only allowed to find out about it after fifteen years – along with the rest of the world.

And they call this sovereignty of the people! Like a monarch, the President appoints all civil servants. He has a civil list of 120,000 francs, a palace and a royal court. Ultimately, he is the grand master of an order, meaning that even this monarchist growth is lacking in the Third Republic. Founded by Napoleon in order that the vanity of his big men would become a pillar of his personal regime, the Order of the Legion of Honour[5] has blossomed in the Third Republic in a way which nobody could have imagined. It also flourished under the Socialist Minister of Commerce,[6] who was able to reward the services to the fatherland of the particularly successful capitalist exploiters for slowly but surely 'preparing' socialism and 'undermining' capitalism. For all that, the order is an expensive business, because it pays its members' pensions. Annually it costs over 16 million. A nice little republican slush fund!

Finally, according to the law of 22 July 1881, defaming the President will be punished more strictly than defaming an ordinary mortal. The President is thus considered a majesty exalted over and above his fellow citizens. The pro-monarchist professor Oncken[7] is quite right when he satisfactorily notes that 'the President of the new republic held the very healthy position occupied by every territorial Prince in every country with a constitution, only that he was elected and stepped down from office himself after seven years'.[8]

We see that the monarchists are quite content with the monarchist position of the President of the republic. The President is elected. That is the entire difference between him and a constitutional monarch like that of Belgium or Italy. But is he not elected by universal suffrage? Indeed he is, but not by equal and direct suffrage. In 1848, the President was elected by the population through universal, equal and direct suffrage. According to the constitution of 1875, he is elected by the National Assembly, which consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

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5 The highest French military and civil order, which was established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.

6 A reference to Alexandre Millerand.

7 Wilhelm Oncken (1838–1905) was a National Liberal historian.

8 Oncken 1890–2, p. 807.

The Senate is the second anti-democratic institution with which the Constitution of 1875 enriched the Republic. As reactionary as it was, the National Assembly did not dare to touch universal and equal suffrage to the Chamber of Deputies. In the two decades of the Empire, it had settled too deeply in the population. The republic could no longer retreat behind the Empire. This was even more the case when, at the same time, the new German Empire made universal suffrage the basis of the Empire.

But just as the German Empire maintained the Reichstag, elected by universal, equal and direct suffrage, as rear cover for the *Landtag* parliaments, which were for the most part elected by universal but unequal and indirect suffrage, the constitution of 1875 created the Senate for the very same purpose. This institution, unknown to both the First and Second Republics, was borrowed from the monarchy.

Just like the Chamber of Deputies, it is based on universal suffrage, yet it is elected by electoral colleges, not directly by voters. Each *département* chooses a certain number of senators. Even the smallest *département* elects at least 2, the Northern *département* 8 and the Seine *département* 10. This distribution alone hinders the representation of the industrial, revolutionary *départements* and favours that of the agrarian and reactionary ones. For instance, the *département* of Hautes Alpes had 109,510 inhabitants in 1901. Here there was a senator for every 54,755 residents. In the Northern *département* on the other hand, there were 1,866,994 residents, or 1 senator for every 233,374 inhabitants. Finally, the Seine *département* of 3,669,930 inhabitants only had 1 Senate representative for every 3,669,993 inhabitants. Thus the Parisians only have one-sixth of the franchise of those living in the Hautes Alpes.

This is indeed the beauty of dividing up constituency boundaries, a beauty which also embellishes the franchise to the German Reichstag. On top of this, there is the composition of the electoral college in each and every department which elects the senators. It is composed of the *département*'s deputies, its general councils and district councils and ultimately of the delegates from the district councils. The latter are particularly of note here. According to the constitution of 1875, every council, however small or large, had the right to elect a delegate to the electoral college. The law of 9 December 1884 staggered the number of delegates roughly according to the size of the districts, but still in a very inadequate fashion. As the following table shows, today too, the small, mainly reactionary rural communities are enormously privileged to the detriment of the large cities. The number of delegates sent to the electoral college as Senate electors from each district is as follows:

Population of the district	Delegates
Up to 500 inhabitants	
From 501 to 1500	1
From 1501 to 2000	2
From 2001 to 2500	3
From 2501 to 3000	6
From 3001 to 3500	9
From 3501 to 10,000	12
From 30,001 to 40,000	15
From 40,001 to 50,000	18
From 50,001 to 60,000	21
Over 60,000	24
Paris	30

We see how disadvantaged the large cities of over 60,000 inhabitants are – Paris in particular. In 1901, 137 districts were on record as having fewer than 50 inhabitants, and 10,567 districts with 50 to 300 inhabitants. Each of these 1074 districts sends somebody to elect the Senate. Paris and its 2,700,000 inhabitants, however, only send 30 – 1 per 90,000 inhabitants. This six-fold reduction of Paris's representation *vis-à-vis* the smallest departments is combined with a reduction of between 300 and 1,800 times *vis-à-vis* the smallest districts, which make up a third of all of France. And both the former and latter injustices increase to the extent that the population of Paris and the industrial centres grows and the flat land becomes depopulated.

Between 1881 and 1901, the number of districts with fewer than 50 inhabitants increased from 67 to 137. The number of districts with between 50 and 300 inhabitants has increased from 6,771 to 10,567. At the same time, Paris grew from a population of 2,239,928 to 2,714,068 inhabitants. These figures alone show what the rhetoric about the role of universal and equal suffrage in the French Republic is all about. The President is not only chosen by the Chamber, but also by the Senate, which elect him in a joint session, united in the National Assembly. But chosen by unequal suffrage, the President appoints the ministers, and these are just as dependent on the Senate as they are on the Chamber.

A Socialist minister in France is now a minister by the grace of the Senate, an entity which must be amongst the most conservative in the world and which can boast of being one of the few entities in Europe elected by universal suf-

frage that is just as free of social democrats as the Prussian and Saxon *Landtag* state parliaments are. Just as it had distanced itself from a legislative body, the constitution of 1875 also distanced itself from the example of the First Republic and the Paris Commune in matters of organising public administration, completely following in the footsteps of the Empire. Next to nothing was changed in terms of the rule of the centralised bureaucracy. The prefect continued to lord it over the *département*. Without his cooperation, the district was unable to undertake anything of importance. The mayors were the prefect's subordinates.

> All ministries and major branches of the administration are represented in the department's main town: war is represented by the general, the cult by the bishop, finances by the general state treasurer and by various other officials (mortgage keepers, the directors of *enregistrement*,[9] customs duties and indirect taxation etc.) public works by the chief engineer, public education by various inspectors … And all these service managers are in constant rapport with the prefect, who is the boss of most of these managers and combines these different administrations into a single bundle. This ensures that the different administrations know, support and communicate with each other, and in the last instance ensures that the prefect is active alongside nearly all of these civil servants in their official circles.
>
> Indeed, even if he does not command the army corps, the prefect, who is the direct organ of the minister of the interior, actually is in firm control of recruitment; even if he does not gather taxes, he actually plays a part in the administration of the revenue of the departments and the districts. He might not be occupied with matters of the judiciary, but the convicts are placed in his hands, and the prisons are under his exclusive control. He hires and fires teachers and imposes fines on them; he also exerts his influence on the chief engineer of the department in all matters regarding the *départment*'s streets and vicinal paths; last but not least, he manages the *département*'s fortune under the supervision of the general council.[10]

Josat could also have added the following to the prefect's duties: spying on everyone to ascertain their political reliability and using all the means available to him – no small amount – to support the candidates the government was comfortable with during elections. In addition to the prefects, there are the

9 That is to say, the entering of legal documents into the public record.

10 Josat in Lebon 1886, p. 102.

representatives of the *départements* – the general councils – and the district councils. According to the Napoleonic constitution of 1800, both the general councils and the mayors of the larger cities were appointed by the government, while the district councils and the mayors of districts with less than 5,000 inhabitants were appointed by the prefect. The July Revolution ensured that these institutions were elected by census suffrage. The revolution of 1848 made them elected by universal suffrage. The only considerable progress the Third Republic made beyond this was the election of the mayor by the districts (1882), something from which Paris is excluded to this day. It is still subordinate to the Seine prefect, a mayor appointed by the government, to whom a police prefect is attached. This institution of the law of 26 Pluviose[11] in the year VIII (1800) has been maintained right down to the twentieth-century republic, and Mr Lépine ensures that we are readily made aware of its existence on a regular basis. Even Francis de Pressensé[12] recently wondered in *L'Humanité* what the old republicans who had fought the Empire would say if they saw how 'Prussian power under the regime of Mr Lépine[13] is stronger and more independent, the control by the citizens and the monitoring of the ministers more absent than ever!'[14] Serving in the government as he does, Pressensé's latter phrase is intended to reduce the complicity of the government in Lépine's infamies. Lépine is always protected by the government. But what democratic impotence is expressed in this member of the ruling party's cry of pain!

Even today, every decision of the district council is subject to the sanction of the prefect or the minister of the interior; the minister can annul any act of the head of the district – the mayor – and recall any of the appointed police servants of the district. The mayor is not merely a representative of the community, but also of the central authority, whose orders he must carry out. And these orders do not remain on paper, nor do they merely serve to remove clumsiness or misunderstandings. One example: the district council of Roubaix, which the 'Girondists' had taken over, decided, amongst other things, to establish district pharmacies as well as a free legal information centre – a kind of workers' administration. The prefect annulled these decisions and the government sided with him.

The Third Republic did not reduce the army of state officials that it encountered. On the contrary, each ministry sought to strengthen its influence

11 14 February 1795.

12 De Pressensé, Francis (1853–1914, Paris) was a French politician and journalist.

13 Lépine, Louis (1846–1933) was prefect of the Parisian police at the beginning of the twentieth century.

14 *L'Humanité*, 2 October 1904.

by increasing the number of posts in the civil service, which could be given to the minions of one's friends. I currently have one example to hand. Things were not going well for Gambetta[15], the Prime Minister of the time, when on 8 December 1881 'the salaries for two new ministries (agriculture and fine arts) and two new deputy state positions for war and agriculture were to be approved, all of which Gambetta had established himself in order to satisfy a few friends whom he could not otherwise use'. Ribot[16] used this opportunity to get one over on Gambetta in the chamber. He confessed that he had always believed that the advantage of a democratic government, something which distinguishes it from a monarchy, lies particularly in the fact that the powers are distributed among a small number of people. And, moreover, that the superfluous people of the whole ostentatious courtly state who were expected to decorate the old monarchies disappear.

He was astounded to see how for some years the staff of the ministries, instead of decreasing, had constantly been on the rise. From a comparative summary of the budgets since 1674 it became clear that the salaries of the officials of the main administrations alone had increased by millions of francs etc.[17]

Of course, as a minister the virtuous Mr Ribot does not do any better. Paul Louis[18] says that to the extent that the petty bourgeoisie declined and the crisis in the country grew, the ruling class added to the army of officials in order to disarm the new recruits of the revolutionary reserve and to win new contingents to its banner. It added to the military bulwark of 600,000 a civil one of 700,000 to 800,000 families. In doing so it made more than a tenth of the population participants in its rule, and thus in solidarity with it.[19]

The ministerial socialists now join the government in championing bureaucratic parasitism. One of the most superfluous categories of officials is the subprefecture.[20] Year on year, there is a motion to abolish it. In vain. This year, even the budget commission had supported it. Its motion was rejected by 314 votes to 193. All but seven of the ministerial socialists found themselves on the side of the majority.

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15 Léon Gambetta (1838–82) was a liberal-republican politician and Prime Minister of the Third Republic between 1881 and 1882.

16 Alexander Ribot (1842–1923) was a leading member of the French Radical Party and French Prime Minister on three different occasions during the 1890s.

17 Oncken 1890–2, pp. 826–7.

18 Paul Louis (1872–1955) was a French socialist journalist and historian.

19 Louis 1901, p. 280.

20 A local administrative entity that has survived in France to this day.

It is the same story with the judiciary. The republic has not changed anything of significance here either. There is no trace of professional judges being elected by the people. The Third Republic has made the Empire's entire judicial equipment its own, including the position of state prosecutor, which dominates judicial proceedings.

Kurt Eisner is very enthusiastic about the French judges, on whom he believes the French bourgeoisie has bestowed an excellent education. For Eisner, the 'good judge' serves as evidence of this. Unfortunately, he can only come up with one such judge – one perhaps might be able to find a white raven amongst the German judges too. But if one wants to know how 'well educated' the French judges are, then it is worth remembering the trial of Zola,[21] who received a year in prison for suing the military court that convicted Dreyfus. A more shameless perversion of the course of justice – and a more shifty judicial process – is inconceivable.

One year for Zola's struggle for the truth – exactly the same sentence received by the Crettiez sons (of manufacturing). With cool deliberation, they cowardly and treacherously killed three workers who did not in the least pose a threat to them.

The members of the court helped the assassins wherever they could. As the Paris correspondent of reported: 'The trial chamber directly debased itself to the status of the murders' lawyer'.[22] Indirectly, therefore, the judges are encouraging the factory owners to shoot down striking workers – most reminiscent of conditions in that large republic across the Atlantic. The republican bourgeoisie has indeed educated its judges well. It has taught them the highest clemency for wealthy or respected murderers of workers, and unrelenting severity against simple proletarians and those who attempt to sue the people who murdered them.

We will later have an opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the friendliness of the French judges in yet another context. Regarding the relationship between Church and state, the Third Republic has hitherto left everything as it was under the Empire. The Concordat concluded between Bonaparte and Pope Pius VII in 1801 has been retained in its entirety down to today. Even the Socialist minister has approved the cult budget on several occasions. And if there has now been a split between Church and state, then this can be ascribed to a

21 Émile Charles Antoine Zola (1840–1902) was a French journalist and playwright. He was brought to trial for criminal libel in 1898, after writing his well-known defence ('J'accuse') of Alfred Dreyfus – an indictment of the military hierarchy and the Catholic Church, which Zola published in order to bring to the public new evidence in support of Dreyfus.

22 *Vorwärts*, 29 November 1904.

Church provocation. Nevertheless, it can still be doubted whether this split will be a permanent one. We will return to this later.

There is only one more means of rule, the most important one, left to consider. The army. Here, the republic has made drastic changes, but these changes are no different to those carried out by Austria and Russia, for example. Just like them, the Third Republic adopted the Prussian way of destroying military service and replacing it with a standing army. The Great Revolution had already introduced military service and organised a real people in arms. Napoleon replaced universal military service with conscription, as well as the opportunity for the propertied to buy themselves out of military service. The mayors and the subprefecture were to determine this.

According to the law of 27 July 1872, every fit Frenchman is obliged to carry out military service. But he is not an armed citizen trained in the use of weapons. Just like the old professional soldier, he lives in barracks, cut off from the people. Outside of his working life in the military, he is subject to a particular discipline and jurisdiction enforced by a privileged caste of officers who are above bourgeois law. The army's specific discipline and jurisdiction are solely dependent on the soldiers' superiors – in the last instance, the President, who appoints them.

The Third Republic introduced universal conscription not in order to arm the people but to increase the number of soldiers as much as possible. At the same time they abolished the last remnant of the armed people which had been preserved since the Great Revolution, the National Guard. Of course, the National Guard had withered away under the monarchical regime and had become a privilege of the rich, degraded to the status of a mere game with weapons. But as the month of February 1848, and also the period 1870/71 during the war and the events immediately after it demonstrate, in times of revolution the National Guard had nonetheless provided an all too dangerous toehold for arming the people. In 1848, one of the ways in which revolutionaries got hold of weapons was to fetch them from the homes of the wealthy, who made no moves to defend their homes. Thus, in 1871 the bourgeoisie could only sleep peacefully if there were no weapons outside of the barracks, outside of military discipline, and if all classes of the people were disarmed. So it was that the National Guard was abolished in 1872. The introduction of military service went hand-in-hand with the complete disarming of the people.

This was done with the cooperation of the very same bourgeois republicans who, as late as December 1867, had put forward a motion in the chamber demanding the introduction of a militia along the lines of the Swiss system and had demanded the arming of the people in their programme.

Disarming the people put paid to the armed revolution from below; at the same time, however, it opened the floodgates to the putschist appetites of the Praetorian Guard.[23] Today, even the bourgeois republicans are afraid of this rule of the sword, something which they themselves evoked. They attempt to hold back the officer corps through their pathetic system of spying. But in vain. Today the bourgeoisie has come so far that it can only resist the rule of the sword by arming the proletariat. It can only delay the increasingly threatening and ever-encroaching dictatorship of the proletariat with the rule of the sword. It is no longer possible to master both of these factors. Yet since, in the last analysis, it would actually prefer to put up with the dictatorship of the officer caste than with the dictatorship of the proletariat, it obstinately refuses to resort to the only means which could put an end to the regime of the sword for ever – the arming of the people.

This dilemma is not pleasant for the friends of the republic. Yet that is not a reason to close our eyes to the real reasons behind the position of power which the general staff has acquired in the republic, and to nurture the belief that the proletariat can best defend the republic by expecting miracles from bourgeois police-spying and not by energetically asserting its demand for the arming of the people.

The dominant position which the officer corps has necessarily grown into from the militarism of the French Republic becomes most evident in the republic's monarchist sentiment. The constitution of the Third Republic has nothing in common with the state institutions which can be subsumed under the name of the republic; that is, those state institutions established by the First Republic, brought into being by the Second Republic according to the will of the victors of February 1848, or those with which Paris attempted to carry out the Commune in 1871. On the contrary, it has taken over all the institutions of the monarchy which the three great French revolutions attempted to destroy.

The only thing which is republican in the Third Republic is the fact that the direct rule of the bourgeoisie is not mediated by hereditary representatives in the executive arm of the state. But because of this, the bourgeoisie is more likely to collide directly with the proletariat or the petty bourgeoisie on the one hand, and with its own means of rule on the other. The latter strive to morph from means of ruling the lower classes into means of ruling the state.

Modern class contradictions intensify much more sharply than under a monarchy, because classes encounter each other more directly. But these contradictions have to express themselves most trenchantly in a republic with

23 Presumably a reference to pro-monarchist counterrevolutionary forces and fighting formations such as *Action Française*, which was established in 1899.

monarchist means of rule, because on top of the suddenness of class battles in a republic there is the political inequality and oppression associated with the monarchy. This creates a constant desire for political change, something absent in pure democracies. Today, the danger to the republic lies in its monarchist, not its republican, institutions. Yet these monarchical institutions are currently being defended most keenly by the governing republicans of all shades – including the ministerial socialists.

CHAPTER 7

The Bourgeois Republicans at Work

The constitution of the Third Republic is based on the state foundations created by the First Empire. The constitution received its specific form through, as the bourgeois republicans say themselves, the most reactionary chamber that France has ever had. One would have thought that, as soon as this monarchical-clerical chamber was replaced by another one dominated by the anti-clerical, democratic republicans, then the constitution would be revised in a democratic sense. Not at all. To a considerable degree, today's French constitution remains the one provided by Napoleon I and the country squires. For a while, a section of the bourgeois republicans, the Radicals,[1] demanded that the Senate and the presidency – the two institutions that appear to be the most averse to democracy – be abolished. Yet they did not dare to touch militarism or the bureaucracy. They held on to the latter because they were angling for posts within it. But they tried to hoax the population into believing that it was precisely centralisation that formed the best means of carrying out, in the quickest possible fashion, all the blessed reforms with which the republic was pregnant. The population did not need to change anything, it just had to make them – the Radicals – ministers in the place of the existing ones, and everything would go swimmingly. For them, any involvement of the people beyond electing a sufficient number of Radicals to the chamber was superfluous. These gentlemen no longer understand the democratisation of the administration to mean replacing bureaucratic paternalism with self-government, but replacing those from the right of the chamber protecting such paternalism with those from its left side.

Of course, the President – jointly elected with the Senate – and the Senate itself initially stood in their way. Yet because the Radicals turned out to be harmless elsewhere, the Senate's doors opened themselves up to them too. On the other hand, the Senate proved very useful to the Chamber of Deputies as well. As its members are elected by unequal suffrage every nine years, the Senate does not need to be popular amongst the mass of the people. It can put up with being unpopular more easily than the deputies of the Chamber can. Thus these deputies may conduct themselves in a fashion that is friendlier to

1 Founded in 1901, the Radicals (*Parti radical*) were a liberal-republican party. In this period, they were at their most influential as part of a bloc with the Socialists that are the target of Kautsky's critique here.

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the people, may promise the electorate more and may vote in a more radical fashion. They know, after all, that if all the nice decisions really were to restrict capital's dominance or exploitation, then the Senate would ensure that they merely remain on paper.

Thanks to the Senate, the bourgeois Radicals can reap all the advantages of their radicalism amongst petty-bourgeois and proletarian voters – without ever having to worry about damaging the capitalist regime in the process. In this way, the Senate that is not dependent on 'duping the workers' becomes the necessary addition for bourgeois demagogy, which bases itself on 'duping the workers'.

Finally, revising the constitution became increasingly dangerous with the strengthening of the extreme parties on the left and right, who sought not to conserve the existing order but to overthrow it. So it is that, for quite some time now, the Radicals have dropped all agitation against the presidency and the state; today, they consider the monarchical head of state and unequal suffrage to be the sturdiest buttresses of the republic and universal suffrage. The 'republic' that is being defended in France today is still the creation of the country squires who killed the Paris Commune.

Yet a large part of the bourgeois republicans did not require this detour in order to arrive at a point where they recognise, or even worship, the country squires' constitution. They immediately recognised just how much this constitution corresponded to the bourgeoisie's needs to rule, and thus they lightheartedly threw their democratic airs and graces overboard – these were not a living force in them, but mere memories of the Great Revolution. They happily worked on the new constitution and adapted to it. They were the *opportunists*. They did not give up on their radical programme *vis-à-vis* the masses, but knew how to pass off the disavowal of their programme as its completion. Turning black into white through the power of speech is a basic condition for the political existence of opportunism, as it is for the 'cooperation of the classes'. Gambetta developed the art of intoxicating oneself and one's audience in words as much as Louis Blanc.

For example, just listen to how Gambetta spoke about the fact that senators were not to be elected directly, but by electoral bodies. Originally, every municipality – whether consisting of 50 or 2 million inhabitants – was to send an elector to these bodies. It is very difficult to think of a more reactionary electoral franchise, a worse attack on universal, equal and direct suffrage. Yet what a wonderful democratic achievement Gambetta was able to turn this wretchedness into!

'For a long time I have been reluctant', he said to his voters, the workers of Belleville on 23 April 1875, 'to believe that this assembly (the National

Assembly), which is certainly the most monarchist and – how shall I put it – the least unclerically disposed that France ever had, and imbued though it is with the prejudices of oligarchal rule, would nonetheless provide the first chamber that it established with the most democratic basis that France owns: that community spirit, that is to say the 36,000 local authorities in France'. 'Do you now see to what extent the spirit of democracy has permeated all of our minds, and even those of our most avowed enemies, in order for the Senate, which the legislators wanted to create in 1871, to be based on the 36,000 French communes as the source of their inspiration? Indeed, admire the consequences and significance of such a law!' And now Gambetta contrived a glowing picture of all the wonderful things that would happen to France as a result of this electoral law, a law which would not create a Senate, but rather a 'great council of France's communes'.

In this way the abolition of equal suffrage for the Parisian workers was swindled into a victory of the principle of the Paris Commune. A democratic etiquette is glued to this reactionary changeling, and democracy has triumphed over the reaction! This is a method which in terms of its peacefulness and security is incomparable to any other. Victories can only be fought and won if we are prepared to call every defeat a victory!

However, it was only the proletariat and petty bourgeoisie that Gambetta cheated with this method. He did not cheat the bourgeoisie – that class whose interests he was actually representing. He cheated that class whose votes he strove to win, in order to make it subservient to capitalist interests. He was not under any illusions – those who elected him were. The Senate completely corresponds to bourgeois interests.

The constitution of 1875 came about during the aftermath of the uprising of the Paris Commune. Thus its overriding consideration was to shape the republic in a way that made proletarian rule impossible. Today, however, the proletariat is the only power that can effectively thwart the capitalist class, because it is the only class that represents a higher mode of production than the capitalist one. Among the restrictions on the capitalist class, only those won by the proletariat, or those that serve its permanent interests, signify cultural progress, the raising of society to a higher level. All of capitalism's other restrictions inhibit social development, preventing the highest form of economic life hitherto achieved in favour of lower, more backward and outmoded forms, leading to intolerable conditions.

Thus, again and again, capitalism must come to dominate in every constitution that does not lead the proletariat to power. Whether it is as anti-liberal as possible, whether it prefers the petty bourgeoisie, peasants, junkers, soldiers, clerics, absolutist bureaucrat or any other non-capitalist or anti-capitalist

classes, capital will rule in any of these constitutions. Wherever the people, the 'demos', is composed of more petty-bourgeois and peasants than proletarians, capital ultimately usurps the democratic republic too. Yet the 'Empire without the Emperor', as the Third Republic was aptly named, provided a favourable basis for the dominance of capital from the outset. In the Empire with the Emperor, capital ruled with the Emperor and through him, although the Emperor still pursued dynastic aims alongside capitalist ones. In the Empire without the Emperor, it will be the Emperor himself who appoints the ministers, compiles the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies and directs them both. Thus republican politics more easily become capitalist politics than monarchist politics do. This is clearly evident in the example of colonial policy.

It is possible to distinguish between two epochs of capitalist colonial policy. They are as different from two other phenomena with which they are connected: old and recent protectionism. The era of free trade lies between these two epochs. Past colonial policy formed part of the original accumulation of capital; it was based on the direct plunder of rich countries, whose wealth it *imported* into the home country. New colonial policy only comes upon such rich objects of plunder to a limited extent. New colonial policy springs from the needs of a capitalism that threatens to choke on its own abundance, a capitalism that wishes to *export* its riches and its capital to the colonies. All with the purpose, of course, of exporting capitalist exploitation along with it too.

Where it was successfully carried out, old colonial policy not only enriched the capitalists but also the state, which took part in the plunder of the colonies. New colonial policy enriches the capitalists at the *expense of the state*, because initially there is little left to plunder in the colonial countries, whereas the establishment and expansion of capitalist exploitation there demands significant expenditure on military expeditions and on the maintenance of a large ruling state apparatus.

Bismarck,[2] who had a good eye for the interests of the state administration, resisted embarking on new colonial policy for a long time. It was the French republic that inaugurated new colonial policy with all its might when it went to Tunis in 1881, Anam in 1882 and to Tonking and Madagascar in 1883. German colonial policy did not begin until a year later.

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2 Otto von Bismarck (1815–98) was a Junker aristocrat and conservative statesman who was pivotal to the course of German and European history in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In his role as Minister President of Prussia, he unified Germany 'from above' in 'iron and blood', bringing it together under the dominance of Prussian militarism and the Hohenzollern monarchy.

The *Panama scandals* of 1888 best show the degree to which high finance knew how to dominate both government and chamber, and make their deliberations directly subservient to it. Yet French *railway policy* shows how little the state administration was able to do this when it came into conflict with capitalist interests. The railways turned out to be one of the most powerful of the modern means of war. All modern great states in continental Europe thus strive to nationalise their railway network as much as possible, in order to have it solely in their hands. In the German Empire, this nationalisation has almost been carried out completely. Things are different in the French republic. It spared no costs in putting its army on a par with the German one. It spares neither the people's blood nor the people's good for this purpose. But French capital's burning patriotism will be rapidly extinguished if the territory it exploits is to be restricted by measures to protect the fatherland.

The experience of the Franco-Prussian war had clearly proved the necessity of nationalising the railways for modern warfare. Thus in Prussia the state went about purchasing them in a lively manner, above all from 1879 to 1884. France's patriots sought the same thing too. Specifically, Gambetta energetically championed nationalisation. But the 'dictator' knew to give up the profit greed of the very same bourgeoisie whose interests he himself had promoted so much.

Following the failure of the nationalisation projects, there were negotiations between the state and the six major rail road corporations. The results of these negotiations were the treaties of 1883 – *les conventions scélérates*, the nefarious treaties, as people rightly called them afterwards. Far from restricting the privileges which the Empire had bestowed on the corporations, these privileges were recertified and increased. A series of railways, which the state had been building since 1789, were *given* to the corporations *for free*. Likewise, the Western Railway was given the 80 million francs it owed to the state. The companies were granted minimum dividends guaranteed by the state, as follows:

The Eastern Railway:	7.5 % of invested capital
The Western Railway:	7.1 % of invested capital
The Southern Railway:	10 % of invested capital
The Mediterranean Railway:	11 % of invested capital
The Orleans railway:	11.1 %
The Northern Railway:	13.5 % of invested capital

As a result of these treaties, the burden on the taxpayer was enormous. In ten years (1884–93), guaranteed subsidies from the state to the railways amounted

to 688 million francs. And all the while the companies' plunder of the passengers and cargo continued.

The worst thing, however, is how these contracts came about. Just like Rouvier,[3] the correspondent of the chamber's commission, Raynal,[4] the minister of public works, portrayed the contracts and their beneficial consequences for the treasury and for transport in the rosiest light. However, testing their pretences was made extremely difficult. At the *government's urgent request*, their report to the Chamber of Deputies' commission, and then to the house itself, was delivered *extremely quickly*. Those deputies who demanded a thorough examination and discussion beforehand and who explicitly protested against such important documents being, as Camille Pelletan[5] put it, casually rushed through, were voted down.[6]

The ease with which these contracts were drafted is evident from the fact that they did not contain any exact rules on how long the state was obliged to guarantee the dividends. The duration of the guaranteed obligation was never explicitly mentioned – neither in the justification given for the draft law on the contracts, nor in the proceedings of the House of Representatives or the Senate.[7]

Several railways interpreted the contracts to mean that the warranty obligation should last until the concession expired (which was not until 1960 in the case of Southern Railway), whereas in 1894 minister Barthou[8] assumed that the obligation expired in 1914. But the State Council decided for the companies. Between 1884 and 1893, the Southern Railway had already received 135 million from the state. Extending the guarantee obligation from 1914 to 1960 for this company alone can easily cost the state *half a billion* and more.

It is obvious that such shrewd businessmen as Raynal, Rouvier and the majority of the French parliamentarians are not concluding such contracts out of inexperience or carelessness. After all, from the beginning this whole band

3 Maurice Rouvier (1842–1911) was a French Republican politician who was Prime Minister of the Third Republic on two occasions, in 1887 and 1905. He also served as Finance Minister in the Radical cabinet of Émile Combes.

4 David Raynal was Minister of Public Works between 1883 and 1885.

5 Charles Camille Pelletan (1846–1915) was Minister of Marine in Emile Combes's *Bloc des gauches* between 1902 and 1905. He was part of the left wing of the Radicals.

6 Van der Leyen 1895, p. 99. (Kautsky's footnote): most of the other data presented here about the contracts of 1883 are also taken from this article.

7 Ibid., p. 116.

8 Jean Louis Barthou (1862–1934) was Prime Minister of the Third Republic for eight months in 1913.

was charged by the press and the chamber with having been bought by the corporations, and the accused always answered these accusations with cover-up attempts. The main culprits also then figured in the list of Panamists, among them Mr Rouvier, now Finance Minister in Combe's ministry.[9] In the opinion of some naïve socialists, Combe's ministry was appointed to inaugurate the abolition of capitalist exploitation. In reality, the presence of Rouvier is a guarantee to the capitalist class that the socialists' support for the government does not entail the slightest restriction of the capitalists' plundering of the state.

Indeed, neither of the last two 'socialist' ministries did so much as raise a finger to bear down on the great railroad corporations; Millerand increased capital subsidies even more by making sure that the large shipowners received premiums.

The French state budget of 1904 records:

Subsidies and interest payments to railway companies
Ministry of Public Works: 97.6 million francs
Subsidies to mail steamers: 26.653 million francs
Subsidies for the merchant fleet (Department of Commerce):
29,250,000 francs
Total: 153,503,000 francs

We see that capital is not stunted in the Third Republic even under socialist ministries or governments supported by socialists.

The Third Republic's Fiscal Policy

When it comes to wasting public funds in favour of the capitalist class, the Third Republic can compete with the Second Empire. When it comes to the energy with which it burdens the lower classes, the Third Republic is superior. Colonial policy, the increase in official posts, the expansion of the army and the subsidy of capitalist enterprises saw state expenditure surge tremendously.

We saw above that Adolf Wagner puts the growth of state tax revenue at 1.543 million francs between 1847 and 1870. Yet from 1870 to 1885 he notes a further increase to 2.692 million, and in the budget of 1904 this is estimated to be 3.571

9 Refers to the cabinet led by the Radical politician Émile Justin Louis Combes (1835–1921), which succeeded the Waldeck-Rousseau administration in June 1902 and lasted until January 1905.

million. That means an increase of *two billion* between 1870 and today, more than a doubling of the tax burden. And among a population that has almost stayed the same! In 1847, the population was 36 million. In 1870, it was over 38 million. In 1901, the figure was not quite 39 million. In 1847, the tax burden per capita was 30 francs. In 1870, this was 40 and in 1904 92 francs. During the two decades of the Empire, it increased by 10 francs (33%), but during the three decades of the republic it increased by 50 francs (125%). Today then, a five-person family will on average pay 450 francs in tax!

What is more, the increase in tax was not enough to cover the state's rising expenses. New debts had to be made over and again. According to a survey in the *Statesman's Year Book*, French national debt amounted to the following:

	Capital	**Interest**
28 September 1800	714	36
1 January 1815	1,272	64
1 August 1830	4,426	199
24 February 1848	5,913	244
1 January 1852	5,516	239
January 1871	12,454	386
January 1889	21,251	739
January 1899	29,948	1,256
January 1902	30,343	1,192

Even if one subtracts the five billion in reparations and even the three billion in war costs, there is still an increase in debt of about 10 billion. But the increase in tax does not in and of itself characterise the capitalist regime. The call for the least tax possible is a petty-bourgeois one. A proletarian regime also requires high taxes in so far as it is not organising in a socialist way, as can be the case, for example, in municipalities conquered by the proletariat within the capitalist state. Large-scale social reforms are impossible without great expense. Here we see one of the greatest difficulties faced by any kind of socialist municipal policy within the capitalist mode of production.

So high taxes by themselves do not distinguish a proletarian regime, or a regime friendly to the proletariat, from a capitalist one. However, the type of taxes and their movement do. And here the Third Republic marches at the head of the capitalist states. We saw that the First Republic strove to meet the state's needs as much as possible through direct taxation – and, where this was

not enough, through confiscating the goods of the enemies of the people. Even before conquering the republic, the revolutionary people had almost entirely abolished indirect taxation itself, doing away with the organs that raised taxes. Yet we also saw how, simultaneous to the overthrow of the lower classes, there began a return to indirect taxation again. Since then, they have become the mainstay of the French tax system, as of every other bourgeois tax system. In contrast to the First Republic, the Third Republic has not made indirect taxation *less* significant since it took over from the Empire, but *more*.

If, after adding the figures from 1904, we take a look at Adolf Wagner's table, which, as we have mentioned several times already, was published as a supplement to his *Spezielle Steuerlehre*,[10] and which was extended to 1894, we see the following results:

	1847	1870	1885	1894	1904
In million Francs					
Direct taxation	331.7	332.8	446.5	535.0	626.2
Transport taxes	253.8	446.5	708.0	710.3	759.4
Indirect taxation	464.8	708.9	1309.6	1542.4	1945.9
Other smaller taxes	48.0	54.8	228.3	186.0	239.5
Total	1098.2	1543.0	2692.4	2973.7	3571.0
Percentage					
Direct taxation	30.2	21.5	16.6	18.0	17.5
Transfer Taxes	23.1	29.0	26.3	23.9	21.2
Indirect taxation	42.3	46.0	48.6	51.8	54.5
Other smaller taxes	4.4	3.5	8.5	6.3	6.8
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Progression					
Direct taxation	100.3	134.6	161.3	188.7	100
Transport taxes	175.9	279.0	280.0	299.2	100
Indirect taxation	100	152.5	281.7	331.8	418.6
Other smaller taxes	100	114.2	475.6	387.6	499.0
Total	100	140.5	245.2	278.0	325.2

10 Wagner 1896.

The growth of direct taxation cannot be seen clearly from this table, because the French budget does not view taxes such as inheritance tax as direct taxation, as we do, but as a transaction tax. But most strikingly evident in the table is the constant growth of indirect excise duties. While the total amount of tax *tripled* since 1847, indirect taxation *quadrupled*.

Kurt Eisner finds the French state 'far more anti-capitalist than the Prussian-German tax fleece'. He is particularly impressed by the French *land tax* and *inheritance tax*, which he contrasts with the Prussian *income tax*. It is true, the land tax is revolutionary in origin. It was supposed to be the only tax, to tax surplus value. In 1870, the return from it was estimated at 240 million francs. What has happened since then?

The original principal amount of the whole state's property tax allocation has experienced *significant reductions*. But then this much reduced quota has been

> for the most part indeed stable for a long time (1821), against the nature of tax, against the original intentions of the legislators and in complete contrast to the development of French tax requirements and most of the remaining, especially *indirect transaction taxes and excise duties*, but also in contrast to patent tax, all of which thus saw land tax become unbalanced.[11]

So this disparity was as large as it was under the Third Republic. There is, then, no reason to ascribe this tax, which is over one hundred years old and has lasted longer than all the French regimes, to the current republic. In 1870, it amounted to 172 million; in 1885, to 178 million; and it is estimated to amount to 194 million in 1904. Land tax affects both cultivated land and land that has been built on. Since 1884, these two types of land tax have been listed separately. Thus land tax revenue even *decreases*. In francs, it amounted to the following:

	1884	**1904**	**Increase/decrease**
For agricultural land	118,650,252	104,982,554	−13,717,698
For buildings	57,070,621	89,539,551	+32,468,930
Total	175,720,873	194,472,105	+18,751,232

11 Ibid., p. 438.

We see that the French agrarians have nothing to complain about in the republic. Land tax for them is becoming less and less. We will become acquainted with France's agricultural protectionism in yet another context.

We cannot say the same things about inheritance tax. It is high, and its yield increases with the increase in capitalist wealth. Nevertheless, it is not growing as quickly as the tax burden itself. Between 1885 and 1904, the yield from inheritance tax rose from 177 million to 221 million, or by 25%. On the other hand, general tax revenue rose from 2.692 million to 3.571 million francs, or by 32%. Moreover, this inheritance tax was not created by the republic. It was to be found already before the revolution, in the *ancien régime*. Today it is mainly based on the law of 22 Frimaire in the year VII,[12] the time of the greatest reaction and the rule of the sword, immediately before Napoleon's coup. The law of 25 February 1901, which reformed it, has not changed much of it. Until then, it had not been a progressive tax and as such did not contain precisely what we have to demand from any tax of that sort. Since then, an element of progression has been introduced, but it does not go very far.

Yet there is no question of an exemption from the smallest inheritances, the inheritance portion of the poorest. 1% has to be paid on direct line inheritance between 1 and 1000 francs. This tax increases to a maximum of 2.5% for an inheritance of 250,001 francs and above. For inheritances between people who are not related, however, the inheritance tax amounts to at least 15% (inheritances up to 1,000 francs) and 18% at the most (sums in millions and above.) The son of a millionaire one hundred times over therefore only has to pay 2.5% tax on his rich inheritance. The poor servant girl whose service over many years is rewarded with a small bequest has to give 15% of it to the state. There is another wonderful thing about the French inheritance tax. For small amounts, the tax rate on inheritance between non-relatives is about 15 times as much as that for direct line inheritance. For the largest sums (over a million), this unique progression is only seven times as much.

In addition to these taxes, there are the staff taxes, the tax on movables and the door and window taxes. Personal tax is three times that of the usual daily salary for the council set by the general council (with a maximum of 1.5 francs) and the same amount is paid by both sexes in the council, who are 'enjoying their rights' and are not notoriously poor. That is a quite primitive, brutal head tax. The tax on movables is calculated according to the rent value of the apartment in which the taxpayer lives. There is no progressive aspect here. Or, rather,

12 13 December 1799.

because those on lower incomes pay a greater percentage towards rent than those with higher incomes, this tax is an income tax that actually falls progressively.

Adolf Wagner has the following to say about it:

> Without tax exemption for small dwellings of the poor and with a proportional tax rate, it has, in addition to the personal tax, had a progressive effect on the small people, the mass of the population. These concerns are increased by France's other high consumer taxes.[13]

These same concerns around the tax on movables apply to the house and window tax, which is additionally alarming in that it is nothing other than a tax on the supply of light and air for those in the population who do not work outdoors: it constitutes a tax on their hygiene.

These direct taxes are thus highly irrational, more burdensome on those below than on those above. In the first instance, the indirect taxes consist of monopolies and tariffs which are set at an extremely high level in France. In 1870, the latter amounted to 70 million. In 1885, they were already at 291 million, and by 1904 they were at 421 million. In 1904, the yield of the monopolies was estimated at 480 million francs (excluding the post and telegraphs). The monopoly on tobacco yielded 247 million in 1870, 397 million in 1885 and 433 million in 1904.

The wonders of the French tax system would be incomplete if we did not recall the taxation of the churches. As we have seen, the Great Revolution had abolished the *octroi*. In its place the municipalities were allowed to collect surcharges on direct *state* taxes, initially on land tax. The reaction retained the surcharges, but it tied these surcharges to the *octroi* again, which was introduced in 1798 for Paris and in 1799 for other communes. This *octroi* has been gradually applied in so many municipalities (1,525 different ones in 1888), has been so extensively developed and has yielded such a good return that in terms of financial importance for the huge budget of Paris it significantly surpasses direct taxation through the *centimes additionnels*.[14] The *octroi*, this hangover from the Middle Ages that was already repealed in Prussia in 1873 (the *Mahl-* und *Schlachtsteuer*),[15] is growing and prospering in the Third Republic, as it

13 Wagner n.d., p. 458.

14 Ibid., p. 865. The *centimes additionels* ('additional pennies') was a supplementary proportional tax levied by the local government for a specific purpose.

15 Introduced in 1820, this was a Prussian tax that allowed individual cities to levy duties on imported meat and grain.

did in the three previous monarchies, after the Great Revolution thought it had put an end to it forever. These are precisely the most peculiar traditions of the revolution, which dominate the Third Republic. In the *Concise Dictionary of Political Science*,[16] there is a table from which we can single out the following figures:

Year	*Octroi* communes	*Octroi* district population	Raw yield	Tax per capita
1823	1434	5,997,600	61,871,443	10.32
1863	1508	9,582,144	167,043,698	16.43
1883	1526	12,518,762	285,704,247	22.82
1893	1518	14,108,352	316,847,524	24.54
1898	1509	13,454,110	333,194,906	24.76

The yield from this worst and most reactionary of all taxes is therefore still growing to this day. Compare this with Berlin, where the local taxes per capita in 1898 amounted to 28 marks, of which 42 pfennigs were raised through excise duties.

On top of all this comes the stubborn refusal of each and every previous parliament of the Third Republic to introduce a progressive income tax along the lines of those that have existed in several German states for a long time. The recent draft by Rouvier promises to suffer the same fate as its predecessors. Yet if it really is to become law, then it will be a mockery of a genuinely progressive income tax.

Adolf Wagner finds nothing at all 'anti-capitalist' about the French tax system either. He is full of sympathy for the predominant kinds of taxes in France, both the indirect taxation and the taxation on monopolies. He also says that for the most part the Third Republic's tax system is a necessity, which is true within the context of the *existing socio-political* relations. Yet even he must admit that this system is the opposite of the anti-capitalist regime that attempted to inaugurate the Great Revolution. He also admits that it is the continuation and *accentuation* of the monarchist tax system. In the supplement to his *Spezielle Steuerlehre*, he writes:

16 *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*: Kautksy does not provide a date for the particular edition he is referencing.

> At the start of the second century following the year of 1789, France has never been as distant from the goal of tax policy pursued by the first revolution – the reduction of indirect taxation. Under the influence of the events of 1870/1871, general policies since then, especially in the Third Republic, have seen tax policy implemented and consistently carried out, which has shifted the focus of tax itself increasingly onto indirect taxes on consumption, and onto transaction taxes alongside this.
>
> In the last few years, again since the middle and end of the 1880s, and particularly under the influence of recent tariff policy, this *tendency has even become stronger once again* … an idealist finance man and tax politician from the first revolution who helped to condemn and destroy the tax system of the *ancien régime* would be amazed if he were to see in the French system so many similarities with the old system.[17]

And now a look at how the billions raised in such an irrational and anti-working class fashion are being used. According to the most recent budget, the following figures were spent on:

State debt interest:	1,216,934,612 francs
Tax collection costs:	213,805,685 francs
The army:	680,720,000 francs
The navy:	312,931,882 francs
The colonies:	110,358,097 francs
In total:	2,534,750,226 francs

Expenditure in these areas accounts for 71% of state outgoings. In addition, there are over 150 million francs in subsidies to capitalist enterprises and 43 million francs in Church subsidies. Only 23% of the entire state budget of 3.571 million francs accounts for the rest of expenditure. And a significant amount of this goes to the payment of sinecures and anti-working class purposes.

We must keep these numbers in mind if we want to appraise the republic's strength to shoulder greater expenditure on social reforms. Already the mass of the people is most extremely depressed by taxes. But the capitalists know how to use the handle of legislation in order to fend off attacks on their wallets. Without such legislation, or without a large decrease in the expenditure

17 Wagner 1896, pp. 134–5.

on state debts or the military, the French state is completely unable to raise considerable sums for such reforms, and all promises of such reforms remain empty fancies.

Freedom of Association

Tax is *one* of the areas in which the capitalist republic easily shows itself to be even more anti-working class than the monarchy. Another area is *social policy*. It would of course be laughable to assert that in *all* areas the capitalist republic is more anti-working class than the monarchy, when political power has achieved greater independence from society. There are also areas where the proletariat and the bourgeoisie have the same interests *vis-à-vis* the state administration, and in such areas the capitalist republic is friendlier to the proletariat than the monarchy (assuming that all other things are equal). For example, press freedom is easily greater in the capitalist republic, and the school system much better organised, than under the monarchy. In the area of education, the Third Republic has done great things. Wherever the interests of the state administration and the bourgeoisie coincide, the monarchy and the capitalist republic are on the same level; and that is true of most areas of state life, such as foreign policy (excluding colonial policy, in which capital has far greater interest today than the state), militarism etc.

At the same time, the capitalist republic will easily become more anti-working class than the monarchy wherever working-class interests contradict capitalist interests but to some extent coincide with the interests of the state. I say *to some extent*, because complete harmony between the modern state and the proletariat is impossible in any area of life. Yet on the issue of tax, for example, their interests overlap in that the proletariat is most interested in seeing the propertied classes paying as much as possible to shoulder state debt to their own relief, and the state has an interest in getting as much as it can out of the propertied class for itself. However, the more the state administration is directly dependent on the propertied classes, the less this interest can be realised.

The state administration also has a certain interest in the physical strength and productivity of the citizens as both taxpayers and soldiers. Of course, the capitalist, too, has an interest in employing as many strong and sturdy workers as possible, yet if there are sufficient reserves available then it is of little concern to him how quickly he uses them, how large the number of degenerate elements in the proletariat grows.

A state administration that is more independent of the capitalist class will therefore, if it is not completely rotten and does not live hand in mouth, more

easily arrange institutions to protect the workers than does an administration that is directly dependent on that class. This is shown by the Third Republic as well. Kurt Eisner, unsurprisingly, vaunts the Third Republic's freedom of association and its normal working day. Yet the glory of this splendour fades considerably when we take a closer look at labour policy in the Third Republic.

It is well known that one of the first acts of the Great Revolution was the abolition of the guilds. So as to avoid their revival, the law of 14 June 1791 prohibited workers or entrepreneurs of the same profession joining together to protect their common interests. These regulations were not aimed merely at the guilds of the past. Under the influence of the newly won freedom, which contrasted so glaringly with the outdated misery, there developed in Paris a new strong insurgency movement of wage labourers of all kinds, demanding higher wages. The law of 14 June 1791 was the bourgeoisie's answer to this.

However, initially this was not felt too much. The waged proletariat was still weak, quite caught up in petty-bourgeois ideas. Besides, the political struggle suited it much more as a way of defending its position than did the economic struggle. At that point, the former seemed far more promising. Following the overthrow of the reign of terror, on the other hand, the latter form of struggle came to the fore, ensuring that the law of 14 June 1791 was not just enforced more energetically, but that it was exacerbated by the police measures and laws that eventually culminated in the articles 414, 415 and 416 of the *Code pénal* (1810). The first of these articles punished, with a prison sentence of between six days and six months and a fine of up to 3,000 francs, the associations of entrepreneurs seeking 'unjustly and abusively' to force a reduction in wages. Articles 415 and 416 punished any association of workers and any *déclaration de profession*[18] with one to three months' imprisonment. However, the ring leaders were threatened with two to five years. Also, those who breached the last two articles – that is to say, only the workers looking to get together, not the employers doing the same – were subject to police surveillance for two to five years. In addition, there were the articles 291–4 of the *Code pénal*, which ensured that no association with more than 20 members could be formed without the government's approval.

The splendid ban on association remained in full force until the February Revolution. However, in this revolution the workers were not in power

18 It has not been possible to find any reference to this French term. Judging from the content of article 416 mentioned by Kautsky, the term probably refers to the call for action (boycotts, measures against employers) issued in the name of a professional group (a collective of organised workers). Many thanks to Ian Birchall for searching through numerous French-language dictionaries for me.

long enough to overturn it. They merely brought about the formal equality of the employers and the workers. The associations of both were punished equally.

Not until the 1860s was there a more substantial alleviation of the ban on the right of association, when the Empire wanted to give itself a liberal complexion and when, growing from capitalist prosperity, the proletariat began to stir more and more, inspired by the example of the English workers. Trade-union organisation now became an urgent need for the wage workers, who sought to satisfy this need at any cost. If this could not occur in a legal fashion, then they would turn to illegal methods. These came particularly in the form of hiding mutual assistance funds, which were recognised by the law of 15 July 1850, but had already been tolerated before that. These unions serving the struggle for wages were mainly known as *societiés de résistance* back then, and following the Commune were referred to by the more harmless name of *syndicats*. Already in the 1840s we found such societies of resistance, but only in the 1860s did they acquire such strength and such dimensions that the government had to reckon with them.

As in other things, the imperial government proved completely unrestrained. Fearing the unions, they made concessions to them in order to win them over and subject them to the scrutiny of police powers so as to not let them grow strong. The consequence of this splendid policy was that the trade unions both gained in strength and became ever more oppositional.

The workers were granted the right of association, but the permanent organisation of proletarian resistance remained prohibited. Articles 414–16 of the *Code pénal* were repealed in their old form and replaced by new ones. In line with the new version of Articles 414 and 415, anybody who sought to increase or decrease wages, or to restrict the *freedom of labour* through 'violence, assaults, threats or deceitful manoeuvres', could be punished. For this, people were threatened with a prison sentence of six days to three years and a fine of between 16 and 3,000 francs. Moreover, if these outrages were the result of a conspiracy, then one would be placed under police surveillance. Article 416 banned the *déclaration de profession*.

In an article about the trade unions,[19] A. Leroy correctly observes that with this the old ban on freedom of association had only expired for it to be revived in a new form: one protecting the *freedom of labour*. In doing so, the law of 14 June 1791 remained in existence, yet towards the end of the Empire the tacit acquiescence of the unions grew.

19 Leroy, *La vie socialiste*, Nr. 2, p. 85.

For a long time, the Third Republic did not go beyond the Second Empire. Its only achievement initially consisted of the law of 14 March 1872, which banned the International and threatened its members with a prison sentence of three months to two years.

Organising along the lines of their profession was of course still forced on the workers by circumstances, but under the reign of terror following the Commune the trade unions initially exhibited peaceful tendencies, launched themselves into the formation of cooperatives and bitterly fought the newly emerging socialism, which had been propagated by Jules Guesde and other comrades since 1876. However, socialism gradually began to gain a foothold in the trade unions too, and the longer the unions remained without rights, the greater the danger that the oppositional spirit within them would spread. Thus since 1881 we have seen attempts by the bourgeois republicans to give the unions a legal basis instead of tolerating them, in order 'to secure social peace'. Under the Opportunist ministry of Ferry,[20] with Waldeck-Rousseau as minister of the interior, these attempts led to the law of 21 March 1884, which repealed that of 14 June 1791[21] and declared that articles 291–4 of the *Code pénal* did not apply to the trade unions. Article 416 of the *Code pénal* was also repealed, but articles 414 and 415 remained in existence, protecting the 'freedom of labour'.

The workers in the Third Republic had to wait until 1884 to achieve what the German workers had in 1869.[22] Yet we cannot say that the French right of association was superior to that in Germany. It does have one substantial advantage over the German version: it also applies to *rural* workers. But we would be deceiving ourselves if we assumed that it applied to all layers of the working class. Oddly enough, it only applies to those workers who 'have industrial, commercial or agricultural interests'. So, for example, it does not apply to intellectuals. Not until the law of 30 November 1892 was trade-union organisation allowed for doctors and midwives. In contrast, *teachers* do not have this right until this very day.

The position of those working in state and municipal services, those who do not explicitly carry out 'industrial, commercial or agricultural activity', is particularly problematic. The governments and courts denied that right to many

20 Jules François Camille Ferry (1832–93) was a leading 'Opportunist' Republican who was Prime Minister on two occasions, between 1880–1 and 1883–5. Here, Kautsky is obviously referring to his second period of office.

21 That is to say, the previous *Code penal* of 1791.

22 (Kautsky's footnote): Even longer for some reforms. The time book, which was abolished in 1869 (following a motion from August Bebel) remained in force in the Republic until 1890.

of them. State workers (postal officials and others) could only organise – when the government allowed – following the law of association of 1 July 1901. This law created freer regulations for the associations more generally, although it still contained a series of tripping hazards – especially for associations with international contacts. At the time of writing this, I read lively complaints in the Parisian newspapers of ministerial socialism about the attempts of the director of indirect taxation to destroy his officials' union, whose legal position is not at all beyond dispute. And all the while this union had behaved very subserviently towards the Finance Minister and repeatedly expressed its respect and admiration for the old Panamist Rouvier.

In other words, full freedom of association – so vaunted by our admirers of the Third Republic – is on a very weak footing. Even apart from that, the law of 21 March 1884 contains several other restrictions on the freedom of association. It only allows the unions to deal with *economic* issues – *political* issues are therefore ruled out. The mayor of the locality where the union has its headquarters has to be informed not only about the statutes of the union, but also about the names of its functionaries. This is a regulation which particularly stirred up the workers, because they feared that the mayors would pass these names on to the employers, who would then have no difficulty in paralysing the unions by sacking those concerned. This state of affairs is exacerbated by a further regulation, which states that only those who actually practice the profession may be members of the union. *Former* workers might well be honorary members, but cannot hold office in the union following the administration of justice. (See the commentary on this in the excellent collection published by J. Chailly-Berth and A. Fontaine).[23]

This was received by the French workers as a pitfall, not a concession, and they protested against it. It took a long time before they began to make use of it. Their suspicion was not unjustified. So, for example, the occasion of the closure of the Parisian labour exchange in 1893 showed that, of the 270 trade unions which it comprised, 120 unions did not meet the requirements of the law. This suspicion partly explains why in 1890 only 140,000 French workers were organised in trade unions. This number only rose sharply with the economic upturn, which began in the middle of the 1890s.

Trade-union organisation in France is therefore much younger than in most European capitalist countries. As mass organisations they are only a decade old. Despite the existence of a strong proletarian tendency in politics for over a century, despite the existence of independent workers' parties for over 60

23 Chailly-Berth and Fontaine 1895.

years, the proletariat in the republic has only recently acquired the basis of its trade-union organisation and with this a mass organisation of the proletariat. No wonder that the French workers are so far behind other countries when it comes to organisational work, discipline and continuous united cooperation. That, too, is one of the traditions of the Great Revolution from which they suffer.

However, since 1884 the opposition to strikes and trade unions amongst the government and the judges has in no way been overcome. But we have already pointed out that trade-union organisation among many state employees was still prevented by the 'socialist-friendly' ministries as well. Especially in recent years, the attempts of individual courts either to persecute the strikers for breach of contract or to make them liable for the damages caused by the suspension of labour are increasing.

And the more the unions grow, the more care is taken to watch over the 'freedom of labour' established by the Empire in articles 414 and 415 of the *Code pénal* – articles that are now more in force than ever before.

The journal *Le Mouvement socialiste* deals in depth with this practice of the courts. The publication pays special attention to trade-union matters. In number 5 of July 1902, Jules Uhry[24] writes about the 'strikes in front of the French courts' and shows that 'the courts are issuing verdicts which amount to the suppression of the right to strike, simply by a new and specific interpretation of the existing laws'.

At the French Trade Union Congress of the previous year (the 7th Congress of the *Confederation Genérale du Travail*) there was a motion from Bourchet and twenty other comrades to negotiate the means to protect the right of association. Bourchet explains the means through which the courts are attempting to abolish the right of association; a new case law is hitting the trade unions. He cites some typical examples: the union of those working in braziery of the Seine *département* were forced to pay 5,000 francs in damages; the union of the moulders 3,000 francs; the formers of the same city 1,000 francs etc. And that is not all. 'To these examples one could easily add another twenty'.[25]

Compare this article with that of Raoul Briquet[26] in the same magazine, of 15 February 1902, on the English court sentences against the trade unions,

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24 Jules Uhry (1877–1936) was a member of the French Socialist Party and a parliamentary deputy between from 1919 to 1932 and from 1933 to 1936.

25 *Le Mouvement socialiste*, 15 February 1902, p. 351.

26 Raoul Briquet (1875–1917) was a member of the French section of the International and a deputy to the National Assembly.

which are placed in parallel with the French judgements. These sentences were issued on the basis of article 1382 of the *Code civil*, which states: 'Every act of a person who causes damages to another obliges the originator of the damage to pay it back'. But, in addition to this, there are the articles 414 and 415. According to statistics shared by A. Leroy in the *Mouvement socialiste* article already mentioned (p. 94), there were 1,027 court prosecutions for violations of the three articles 414 to 416 in the 20 years between 1864 and 1884. In contrast, in the 12 years between 1884 and 1896 there were 1,329 prosecutions for violation of the articles 414 and 415. Of the prosecutions between 1884 and 1896, only 362 involved a fine, 2,069 a prison sentence of up to one year, and six a sentence of more than one year. From 1896 to 1902, the number of defendants charged with this offence was: 107, 169, 158, 150, 373, 312 and 251 respectively. It has thus grown significantly.

We see that in France the development of the right to assembly is the same as in other countries. Initially attempts are made to render trade-union organisation impossible. When that is no longer an option, they are freed up to a certain degree, but now attempts are made to promote their conservative character as purely benevolent funds and to restrict the right to strike as much as possible. In place of the struggle for the right of association, the struggle for the 'freedom of labour' comes to the fore. As I have said, this is the course it takes in France and elsewhere. Yet in the Third Republic the workers had to wait longer for the right of association than in other old capitalist countries, although from the outset the republic undertook to protect the 'freedom of labour'; that is to say, to disrupt and prohibit the right to strike.

Alongside the only too compliant judges and the obliging police, the republic increasingly lugs the military into this splendid business, generally acknowledged as the best means of strengthening the obstinacy of the employers and embittering the workers; that is to say, of exacerbating antagonisms and bringing about unrest, not preventing it. Thus the butchering of workers during strikes has become a hallmark of the Third Republic.

Today in France, soldiers do not just appear immediately wherever there is concern about an outbreak of unrest. They are sent from the outset, even if things unfold peacefully on the stage of the uprising.

At the time of writing, I read in the 9 December edition of *L'Humanité*, which is certainly not spiteful against the ministry, the following passage about the agricultural workers' strike which has just broken out in the South of France:

> Yesterday we made very clear that we disapprove of sending troops to the Narbonnais. Nothing, absolutely nothing justifies this decision. It pleases the administrative authority to place the army in the service of the large

> landowners. They demanded this on a placard, and the prefect *obeys*. That is fine, that is fair enough. We now know who carries responsibility for the things that will happen.

Do the comrades of *L'Humanité* really know this? After all, they speak of the share of power which the proletariat has now won. Does this consist of the prefect 'obeying the large landowners'?

Whence comes the fact that, since the socialists have 'participated' in power, the deployment of troops against strikes has become a more and more regular occurrence, and the butchering of the workers has increased? These phenomena are not an accidental coincidence – they are inherently related. Today's government, which is supported by the socialists, certainly does not have any interest in provoking the workers and getting into a struggle with them. After all, it needs the workers' votes and must strive to counter the susceptibility of the socialists with services in return. But it can only do this where class antagonisms are out of the question.

In state enterprises, capitalist interests do not directly clash with workers' interests. Some ministries therefore tolerate trade-union organisation among their employees and also grant them better working conditions. If possible, from 16 September 1899 on they even granted the eight-hour day, which for example Millerand introduced for workers in the Parisian workshops making postal and telegraph utensils from 16 September 1899 on. He did not introduce this for the whole postal service, as is often assumed. For workers equipping the telegraphs and telephones in the provinces, for instance, he fixed the *eleven-hour day* through the decree of 15 January 1901.

But as much as the government seeks to accommodate the workers where it can, without violating capitalist interests, it has to accommodate the capitalists and their representatives far more, because it is far more dependent on them. And what Jaurès had said about Louis Blanc is true of himself today: his influence on the government does not serve to weaken the capitalists, but rather to increase their irritability and their distrust towards the workers and the government. In Germany, the government does not need to parade the military around at every strike or at every demonstration in order to reassure the bourgeoisie. The German bourgeoisie feels safe enough; it knows that it can count on the state authority. In France today, the bourgeoisie cries that it is being betrayed by the government with every strike, every demonstration. And in order to reassure the bourgeoisie and to retain its support, the ministry must therefore immediately appear to be a strong-arm government during even the most peaceful strike, the most harmless demonstration – proving anew that order is as secure under it as it is in any other police state.

The participation of the socialists in the government only serves to make the socialists more nervous with every movement of workers against capitalists. It does not at all serve to make the capitalists more accommodating to the workers. We can attribute this to the same causes which ensured that the adoption of Louis Blanc and Albert in the government of the February Revolution was followed by the battle of June and which ensure that the republic is the form of government in which social antagonisms are most sharply expressed.

The Normal Working Day

Alongside the Third Republic's *right of association*, its *worker protection* is particularly vaunted. In reality, the Third Republic needs not be proud about this either.

However, when the proletariat conquered the Second Republic, it was granted the concession of a statutory reduction in working hours. A decree of the provisional government of 2 March 1848 stated that the working day had been shortened by one hour, and in Paris was henceforth to consist of 10 hours instead of 11 as had generally been the case until then. In the provinces, it was reduced to 11 hours from 12. But hardly had the battle of June been fought out and the dream of the 'social republic' come to an end, than the bourgeois republic hastened to take back this concession. The law of 9 September 1848 established a maximum working day of 12 hours for 'manufactories and factories'. A decree of 17 May 1851 then permitted a number of exceptions to this splendid 'normal working day' – for example, a fourteen-hour day for chemical and sugar factories. These exceptions were a worthy crowning achievement of this edifice of bourgeois-republican social policy.

Yet even this pitiful normal working day remained on paper, because no inspectors were provided to oversee its implementation. The Third Republic finally deployed inspectors through a law that introduced a little child protection at the same time. The first French child protection law of 1841 had banned children under the age of eight from working, and had established a working day of eight hours for children between eight and twelve. But just like the protective laws of the Second Republic, it remained a mere showpiece. In 1868, the Empire intended to improve the law of 1841, but the draft bill broke down in the Senate, and the war interrupted the reform. So it was only in 1874, with the prohibition of child labour up until the age of 12, that there was progress concerning the protection of child labour. But there were manifold exceptions that allowed children to work from the age of 10. For children between 10 and 12, working hours were reduced to six hours, and to 12 hours for those between

12 and 16. The latter provision was a naïve effrontery, because on paper the law of 9 September 1848 was still in place, which ordered a 12-hour working day for *all* workers. From this, we see how ineffectual this provision remained. Only in 1883 was the law of 1848 finally remembered again, and its implementation was handed over to the inspectors who had been created in 1874 to monitor the child protection law. The inspectors now had to ensure that all workers and then those between 12 and 16 only worked 12 hours per day. In fact, almost everything remained the same. Everywhere, amongst employers and the authorities, the inspectors encountered insurmountable obstacles.

Only in 1892 did the republic receive the first worker protection law worth mentioning – partly under the impetus of the rapidly growing social democracy and partly under the influence of the general international spirit of the time, which brought worker protection into fashion. In contrast to Bismarck's approach, the 'new course' had emerged in Germany. However, today the proletariat has become such a force that no new system of government can get by without making concessions to the working class. This provided Austrian adult workers with the 11-hour day as far back as 1885, and brought the German workers the Workers' Protection Act in 1891.[27] This was also the time of the emergence of new unionism in England, which was expected to see the workers swing towards the camp of social democracy and which drove the English liberals to flirt with the idea of the *eight-hour day*. The republic could not have remained too far behind this, and so – in spite of the stubborn resistance of the Senate – the law of 2 November 1892 came into existence, which might not have done anything for male labour, but did regulate that of women and children. Child labour by those under the age of 12 was now absolutely forbidden, and 12-year olds were only allowed to work if they could produce an adequate school report and medical confirmation of their physical fitness. Child labour up until the age of 16 was not supposed to surpass 10 hours per day. For girls from their sixteenth to their eighteenth year, a working week of 60 hours was established, with a maximum working day of 11 hours. For women over 18, the working day was set at 11 hours.

The German Worker Protection Act of 1891 is a very modest thing: it met the demands of the workers so little that the social democrats in the Reichstag voted against it. But the French law of 1892 even remained far behind the Ger-

27 A law that placed more regulations on work-place safety, banned work on Sunday; introduced a maximum working day for women and those under 16; prohibited night work and child labour (those under 13) in industry. Further, it created co-determination committees and tribunals. As Kautsky explains, the SPD Reichstag deputies actually voted *against* it on account of its inadequacy.

man law. A working day of 11 hours was set for women in France. In Germany, it was also set at 11 hours, but was restricted to 10 hours on Saturdays and days before public holidays. In Germany, work by those under 13 was prohibited. In France, factory work was absolutely forbidden for those under 12. Here in Germany it is impossible for anybody under 14 to work wherever compulsory education lasts that long. In France, this is only the case up until the age of 12, and only for those children who have no school records after leaving primary school.

But this was not all. This law also shared the fate of its predecessors – it was only implemented in the most inadequate fashion. This is most unequivocally testified to by none other than the French Minister of Commerce himself, Mr Millerand. In the book that Mr. Lavy[28] wrote in his praise, it says, among other things: 'Citizen Millerand had to try (when he became a minister) to achieve the strict implementation of our general law on child and female labour – that fundamental law of 2 November 1892, which until then had come across insurmountable resistance in several aspects'.[29] Millerand gave the prefect some orders in this direction, but this 'agitated the businessmen, who had got used to a regime of the greatest tolerance and to letting themselves go as they pleased'. They most energetically demanded further tolerance of their violations of the law. Citizen Millerand responded to this pressure with an unwavering firmness and replied only by saying that he instructed the qualified authorities to observe the current laws with greater vigilance than ever. 'I thought', he explained to the chamber on 23 November 1899, that 'the law of 1892 was a real law, and thus was to be implemented like one'.

However, Millerand's 'unwavering strength' was soon shaken by the resistance of some capitalists. The report continues:

> In spite of everything, neither the most energetic injunctions nor the strictest orders had facilitated the immediate abolition of the entrenched abuses, explained at the time by the fact that they had previously been tolerated. It was the extension of the working day for children under sixteen to 11 hours – a flagrant violation of article 8 of the law of 1892 – which was the result of the *modus vivendi* which the authorities had recognised for years through their explicit consent [*acquiescement exprès*].[30]

28 Jean-Baptiste-Aimé Lavy (1850–1921) was a founding member of the *Parti Ouvrier*, municipal councillor and deputy to the French National Assembly.

29 Lavy 1902, p. 27.

30 Ibid., pp. 35–6.

The great campaign for the implementation of the Worker Protection Act culminated in the recognition of its impracticability. 'I acknowledge', Millerand declared in the chamber on 23 November 1899, 'in agreement with a large number of industrialists, perhaps all of them, that a law which creates different types of workers in the same factories, of which some work 10 hours, some 11, is a bad law – for it is impossible to oversee its implementation'. In reality, these same differences in working hours exist for the various categories in Germany. Children under 14 work for six hours, children between 14 and 16 for 10 hours, workers over 16 for 11 hours, and then there are also men without any legal restrictions. Nevertheless, no one will claim that the law in Germany is unenforceable. But it is true that it is more enforceable if all the workers have to start and finish at the same time. But this in no way means that the same number of working hours *per week* must be allowed for all workers. In England's non-textile factories, for example, young workers and women may work for 60 hours a week, yet children may only work for 10 hours every other day, or 6.5 hours every day.

There is no worker protection law in the world which sets the same working hours per week for children as for adults. In France, however, the incomprehensible became reality under a socialist minister. In order to make the Worker Protection Act of 1892 enforceable, he had no other idea than to make both daily and weekly working hours the same for *all* workers – for grown men and for children. The apologists of the new law have always emphasised the latter regulation only. They have forgotten that for children this regulation was already behind the inadequate provisions of the Act of 1892.

Lavy explains vauntingly:

> The socialist minister placed the chamber and the Senate before the unavoidable alternative: either implement the law of 1892 with unwavering rigour from 1 January 1900 on at all costs, or pass a new law, the implementation of which would be less cumbersome and, alongside other essential reforms, would establish a ten-hour working day for children, for women and even for men. Whether it liked it or not, the parliament felt compelled to choose the latter alternative.[31]

It thus preferred the new law to the implementation of the old one. And it had every reason to do so. Because eight years after the Act of 1892 had reduced child labour to 10 hours per day, the new law set it, at least temporarily, at 11 hours per day. What progress!

31 Ibid., p. 39.

Millerand responded to those who pointed this out to him by saying: 'Is it true that children work only 10 hours? That is not true and the law that the commission is proposing to you merely lays down what is already the case – the 11-hour working day of children and women'. In other words, until 1900 the Republic actually renounced any worker protection. That is clear from Millerand's law. But does it also prove that there is now real worker protection worthy of the name in France?

In the factories where women and children work, and *only* in these factories, not in all of them, the law of 30 March 1900 fixed the same number of working hours for *all* workers, including adult male workers, at 11 hours per day. After two years, it was reduced to 10.5 hours, and after a further two years to 10.

This is the much-vaunted 10-hour day, for which the French workers are supposed to thank Millerand. It is obvious that the 10-hour day does not deserve the great praise it has received. Incorrectly, it is seen as representing a 10-hour day for *all* men. Moreover, it is often overlooked that the most important group of workers that should be protected the most – children – are still worse off under this law than, say, working children in Germany, who are not overly protected at the moment. To this day, children in France can be employed from the age of 12 – and for 10 hours a day at that! – whereas in all German states where compulsory education extends to the age of 14, factory work for all children up to this age is forbidden.

Even bourgeois social reformers are not enthusiastic about the new law. In a paper he gave to the French section of the international association for legal worker protection, Mr Martin Saint-Leon[32] quoted a number of doctors who called the provisions of Millerand's law on child labour *monstrous, criminal even*, and further demonstrated that 'almost everywhere else the law is much more effective at protecting children and young workers in the factories than here in France'.[33]

But not even this law is being implemented. Industrialists and judges compete with one another to get around it and make its evasion easier. The complaints about this are becoming louder and louder in worker circles – numerous articles in the party press make them known. Just recently, in *Le Socialiste*, A. Groussier[34] wrote a good summary of the court rulings that honeycombed the law, to which the lawyer Uhry already alluded in *Le Mouvement socialiste* of March 1902.

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32 Étienne Martin Saint-Léon (1860–1934) was a French jurist and historian.

33 Martin Saint-Leon 1904, p. 99.

34 A. Groussier *Le Socialiste*, 4 December 1904. Arthur Groussier (1863–1957) was a French socialist.

We have already mentioned that men are only protected by the Millerand-Colliard law in factories where they work alongside women and children. With its rulings of 30 November 1901 and 20 February 1902, the Court of Cassation has now decided that any premises where men work alone – without women or children – do not fall under the law. So all that mixed firms have to do to place themselves outside of the law is to set up a partition to separate the men from the other workers.

A ruling of 2 January 1902 then determined that the provisions of the act concerning breaks from work for children were only valid where they worked the maximum working day permitted by law. As soon as the working day fell a little behind this, the provisions were no longer valid. But how to control which working hours are really in effect in the factory? There is only one way that enables effective control: the manufacturer must indicate the beginning and end of working hours from the start, and if workers are found working prior to or after the specified time of work, then this should be considered as proof of a violation of working hours. As shown by a series of rulings from the past year, however, the Court of Cassation thinks differently. It disregards the number of hours the workers spend in the factory: it demands factual proof that they are working for more than 10 hours. It is fair to assume that Groussier is right when he surmises that, given the disposition of the judges, this proof will only be considered to be adduced if the inspector has stood next to the worker and watched him at work for 10 hours.

These judgements cited in *Le Socialiste* come alongside another one cited in the edition of 15 November 1903 of *Le Mouvement socialiste* – the judgment which strips the inspectors of the right to enter a factory at night if it is only geared to work in the daytime, 'because by night these establishments are placed under the protection of householder's rights'. It was thus made virtually impossible for them to ascertain whether work was being illegally carried out at night or not. If, in spite of everything, the inspectors actually manage to establish a violation of law in such a manner that the courts have to sentence the factory owner, then he will be given a laughable punishment, as proved by the complaints in the inspectors' reports.

If we may nevertheless assume that the law will not entirely remain a dead letter like that of 1892, then in doing so we are counting on the unions – which in both France and Germany are far stronger than 12 years ago and which are doing their utmost to promote the implementation of the law and to thwart the criminal accord of entrepreneurs, judges and police aimed at paralysing the laws that are already so feeble. There are numerous strikes fighting to enforce the law – but here too the workers are confronting the government. 'If the workers demand nothing but the implementation of the law',

Latapie cried at the last Trade Union Congress of Bourges, 'then the government sends soldiers against them, in order to protect those who violate the law'.

In July 1904, the American Labour Office published a comparative review of the working hours in 13 different trades for Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain and the United States in the period from 1890 to 1903, obtained from the payrolls of typical firms. It shows that, Belgium excluded, France had the longest working hours and the lowest reductions in working hours during this period. Some samples from the survey may illustrate this. The average working hours per week were as follows:

	France	**Germany**	**England**	**United States**
Blacksmiths				
1890	60.84	62.00	54.0	59.41
1900	60.84	60.00	53.7	58.87
1903	60.19	59.90	53.7	56.65
Bricklayers				
1890	63.00	59.75	52.7	53.22
1900	63.00	56.50	51.8	49.82
1903	63.00	56.50	51.8	47.83
Carpenters				
1890	60.00	59.41	52.7	55.94
1900	60.00	55.47	50.2	51.86
1903	60.00	55.30	50.2	49.41
Day labourers				
	(Just Paris)			
1890	60.00	59.98	54.2	59.02
1900	60.00	56.70	52.5	58.27
1903	60.00	56.36	52.5	56.13
Stone masons				
1890	66.00	59.75	51.0	54.54
1900	66.00	56.50	50.2	51.89
1908	66.00	56.50	50.2	49.54

The other trades exhibit the same phenomenon. They illustrate France's backwardness regarding working hours and show the wretchedness of what the Third Republic has achieved for the proletariat in work.

Parliamentary Corruption and Economic Stagnation

We have seen that, in all the areas where the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie and the proletariat clash, the Third Republic has done no more for the proletariat than the first monarchy and that, on the contrary, it has allowed tendencies hostile to the proletariat to emerge even more than was the case under the monarchy. It is all the more surprising then, that industry – that is, industrial capital – by no means continued to enjoy the boom it had enjoyed under the Empire. The reasons for this are manifold, but they partly lie in the republic's economic policy. The industrial capitalists themselves are not always the best advisors for their interests. In their greed for profit, they are only too inclined to undermine the basis of enduring prosperity in favour of momentary advantage, to slay the goose that lays golden eggs. It is well known that low wages and long working hours generally deliver the most expensive product. In addition to the fight against trade unions and worker protection laws, French industrial capital also led the fight for high protective tariffs – that is, for a rise in the cost of the conditions of production – here too. The transition to free trade had been the wisest economic deed of the Empire. The regime of protective tariffs began with its fall.

With the short-sightedness of the industrial capitalists came the fact that they did not rule the state by themselves, but had to share power with the bureaucracy and the military as well as with a strong landowner class. But above all, they had to share it with high finance, which for more than a hundred years had been the power which, despite all changes in the forms of government and dynasties, has always remained the supreme ruler of France. In league with high finance, as a means of making the country's democratic forces subservient to it in order to plunder the state alongside high finance, are the *professional politicians*. Admittedly a smaller part of the bourgeoisie, they are all the more powerful for it, and they play a role in every parliamentary state. In fact, their role is greater where parliament is more powerful, where the area whose exploitation it oversees is richer and where the mass of the people is weaker *vis-à-vis* the parliamentarians; that is to say, where the parties are less democratically organised and disciplined and where the parliamentarians only have to manage an unorganised mass of voters, with whom they have always been able to deal easily.

In a republic, these professional politicians become representatives of a state power that has assumed a life of its own, like the sovereign in a monarchy: as with the Caesar under Caesarism, they also will all too easily become pure booty politicians, with even pettier and more base perspectives than those of a Caesarian Emperor. Engels outlined this well in his Introduction to the *Civil War in France*:

> What had been the characteristic attribute of the former state? Society had created its own organs to look after its common interests, originally through simple division of labour. But these organs, at whose head was the state power, had in the course of time, in pursuance of their own special interests, transformed themselves from the servants of society into the masters of society, as can be seen, for example, not only in the hereditary monarchy, but also in the democratic republic. Nowhere do 'politicians' form a more separate, powerful section of the nation than in North America. There, each of the two great parties which alternately succeed each other in power is itself in turn controlled by people who make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the Union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions. It is well known that the Americans have been striving for thirty years to shake off this yoke, which has become intolerable, and that in spite of all they can do they continue to sink ever deeper in this swamp of corruption. It is precisely in America that we see best how there takes place this process of the state power making itself independent in relation to society, whose mere instrument it was originally intended to be. Here there exists no dynasty, no nobility, no standing army, beyond the few men keeping watch on the Indians, no bureaucracy with permanent posts or the right to pensions. And nevertheless we find here two great gangs of political speculators, who alternately take possession of the state power and exploit it by the most corrupt means and for the most corrupt ends – and the nation is powerless against these two great cartels of politicians, who are ostensibly its servants, but in reality exploit and plunder it.[35]

The monarchists and absolutists, however, have no reason to sniff at this republican and parliamentary corruption. Indeed, what alternative do they have to

35 Engels 1975–2004a, p. 189.

it? Nothing but the absolute rule of the bureaucracy, which is no less corrupt than parliamentary corruption. The former only differs from the latter in that its corruption does not emanate from a conflict between two gangs over the available booty, but from the secure monopoly of a single gang. The glorious consequences of this system are becoming clear enough in Russia. Russian bureaucratic corruption or American republican corruption: these are the two extremes between which the life and being of all large capitalist states moves and must move. Only socialism can put an end to this by means of an order such as the one the Paris Commune started to create: that is, by means of the most comprehensive expansion of self-government, the popular election of all officials and the subordination of all members of representative bodies to the control and discipline of the organised people. Already today, the best way to counter parliamentary corruption is through the formation of a large, strictly disciplined proletarian party; by contrast, parliamentary corruption will not be fought by socialist representatives joining one of the 'cartels of politicians' who 'dominate' the nation and 'plunder' it, to use the words of Engels. That can only ensure that the socialists will be less able to fight bourgeois corruption and that they will be made jointly responsible for it. And thanks to its constitution, today's French republic can enjoy all the advantages of uniting parliamentary and bureaucratic corruption.

Let me give just one example of how participating in a bourgeois 'bloc' forces the socialists to tolerate bourgeois-parliamentary corruption. The following resolution was tabled at the 1902 Tours Congress of the Jaurès wing of social democracy:

> As it has become well-known for some time that some members of the Socialist party have sought out decorations of various kinds;
>
> And that such applications are incompatible with all principles of the party, and have to compromise its independence and dignity:
>
> 1. Each member of the party is prohibited from demanding any decoration, from accepting such a decoration or bearing such a decoration
> 2. Party members with elected positions are forbidden from supporting or promoting any demand of this nature.

First to speak was one of the resolution's signatories, citizen Parsons. He demanded that the last passage of the resolution he had signed be deleted:

> This part of the resolution contains a mix-up, because it is clear that when editing up the resolution, Citizen Mallot (who moved the resol-

> ution) only thought of demands that would arise for party members themselves. But the resolution could be interpreted in a way that would mean that a Socialist deputy should not have the right to support applications for an accolade that came from the circle of those who elected him. Well, then we would place our deputies at a disadvantage against the other deputies, and we would deny them the means which are necessary under the capitalist and parliamentary regime in order to attain public office.

Later during the debate, the same delegate said:

> You will never be able to prevent demands being placed on a Socialist from those who elected him who do not yet know the socialist ideal, demands of which he disapproves, but which he then supports out of a certain disregard for those demanding it, and because he is of the opinion that it will not hurt to *corrupt a bourgeois*.
>
> It is of course necessary to keep the party free of any corruption, but since we are a parliamentary party and have set ourselves the goal of infiltrating public office, we cannot demand of our deputies things that are contradictory to the requirements imposed on them by parliamentary tactics.

This is quoted word for word from the official congress record. Following him, Kosciusko spoke in favour of the resolution: 'It is bad enough that we have to establish that our deputies and city councils have to some extent become *employment agencies*, so that we do not yet need to use them to distribute decorations'. Then another deputy, Krauss, came to speak:

> I am a signatory of the resolution and I confess that you would do me a great service if you freed me from today's almost *absolute obligation* to do what our colleagues are accusing us of. But Parsons is right on one point: those who demand the most from us, and accuse us of most, are our own socialist comrades. I want to talk openly. Before I came here a few days ago, a member of our organisation approached me in the corridors and said: 'It is for a friend, and therefore of no importance, write me a recommendation for the award of a palm (an academic award)'. Yesterday, it was possible to read about the award in the *Journal officiel*. Think about this question, then. I ask only one thing: that you free my door from all the candidates for red, blue or any other coloured decorations, which are overwhelming us … *How many times have I had signed such claims*,

> because I dare not refuse it to a comrade, *and you also sign for an influential voter*, who has nothing to do with socialism: you wangle palms for them, or another award … In the records of our congresses there are resolutions which originate from the most puritanical comrades. And the same comrades that have denounced us, have asked for our protection behind the scenes, saying 'Never mind, this is only for a bourgeois', or 'Go to Millerand or Baudin[36] and do your utmost to ensure that the comrade is promoted'.

Following Krauss, Camus explained that he condemned the trading of political offices, but that according to the party statutes, deputies were only responsible to their constituency and thus the party had no right to lay down instructions to them. Last to speak was the chairman, the deputy Gérault-Richard, who introduced a unique proletarian moment, saying that the previous attempts of mainly hunting after offices for comrades and the trading of such offices had been directed at corrupting influential bourgeois voters:

> There are different categories of awards: we have, for example, the medals[37] for the old workers … It is quite cruel, if you, who are in no need of such a childish delight, deprive it of those who have nothing else. You cannot expect to convert humanity overnight: even if we made such a decision, it would not be possible for us to eradicate the need for human beings to distinguish themselves from each other.

If you rob a poor old devil of the innocent joy he gets from wearing a little red hand,[38] you will prove to be a great Puritan, but at the expense of honest people whose pleasure harms no one and will cost you nothing. If we are talking about decorations, then we must think of Madame de Girardin's[39] apposite remark: 'It costs so little and makes for such great pleasure'. This famous plea in favour of the trading of posts freely admitted that the 'old workers' who were being

36 Pierre Baudin (1863–1917) was Minister of Transport between 1899 and 1902.

37 (Kautsky's footnote): Workers who continuously work for more than thirty years in the same company can be 'honoured' by a medal, which is presented to them by the Minister of Commerce. It is a very inexpensive way of 'satisfying' the workers. In the 1904 budget 39,000 francs were set aside for these medals, as against 16 million for the Legion of Honour, the Order of the propertied.

38 An award handed out to French workers.

39 Presumably a reference to the French author Delphine de Girardin (1804–55).

decorated were often careerists and strike-breakers. When Millerand was in Bordeaux, he decorated a worker who had been the industrialists' candidate in the last employment tribunal (*Conseil de prud'hommes*) election.

The outcome of this debate was as characteristic as the debate itself. The resolution could not be rejected and it could not be adopted, because – as Parsons noted so beautifully – the trading of posts and positions is a necessary parliamentary tactic for a party which wants to participate in bourgeois government. They saved themselves from embarrassment by opting for cheap radicalism. The resolution was referred to a commission and replaced by another, which urged the deputies to table a bill that would abolish all types of decorations. However, as yet there has been no speech about this bill. Hopefully the unification currently being prepared[40] will succeed in placing the party on a new footing, making all those means that are necessary to those who 'under the capitalist regime' 'want to attain public office' inaccessible to socialist deputies.

These *documents humains* are sufficient to show that socialist entry into the bloc of governing parties changed nothing about the old 'parliamentary necessities', but rather subjected the socialists to them. Today in the republic we can still find both 'cartels of politicians', who scuffle over the spoils. They are now called 'blocs'. However, even the most corrupt cartel booty politicians cannot govern at will. Their policies are given by the circumstances of the time. Because they belong to the bourgeoisie, these gentlemen carry out bourgeois politics: they carry out the politics of high finance, which has paid for them in one form or another; but they also have to carry out politics that do not snub their voters too much. They thus have to be anxious about demagogic concessions. But eventually every cartel must defend those principles that make them appear plausible and that keep the competing cartel away from the feeding trough, which is not large enough to satisfy both at the same time.

The politics that emerge from this do not always have to be deleterious, and from time to time can coincide with the real needs of social development. But often they come into conflict with these needs. In France, the impact on its parliamentarians has hitherto been an economic policy that does not even ensure the progress of industry, let alone that of proletarian interests. If the National Assembly of the Great Revolution was guided by comprehensive theories and high politics, thus pursuing a consistent and bold policy which raised France

40 See the final sections of this part for more on this unification.

from ruin to the head of the European nations, then the parliamentary system of the Third Republic is a discharge of the most baseless and short-sighted politics of the moment, which is allowing France to sink deeper and deeper economically.

However, this cannot be attributed to French economic policy alone. It is also related to circumstances independent of it. 1871 saw the unification of Germany and thus the emergence of a new, formidable competitor. The same war that saw Germany expand by two provinces and brought five billion into the German treasury made France poorer by these two provinces and several billions, after it had been horrendously devastated. The French Republic could do nothing about that. That was the legacy of the Second Empire. But instead of ensuring, through wise and cautious policy, that the burden on the country from the consequences of the war would disappear as soon as possible, the Third Republic further increased this burden through its grand geo-politics, through the union of militarism and navalism. Thus arose that immensely onerous tax burden which initially only hit the lower classes but eventually constricted the whole of economic life, a burden to which the vast bureaucratic apparatus also contributed a not insignificant amount. The restriction of large industry corresponded to a stagnation in population growth, which in turn reacted on industry because it was coupled with an end to the expansion of the domestic market, something that became all the more dangerous as foreign competition increasingly restricted the market abroad.

The stagnation of industry allowed the predominance of the rural population to remain in place: in 1896, 61 percent of the French population still lived in in the country, whereas in Germany this figure was just 51 percent. This predominance of peasant votes then drove the bourgeois politicians to pay greater attention to rural interests at the expense of the city – especially in tax and customs policy, which in turn had to impair industry. 'The French agricultural politician Coste', Goldstein reports, 'who is extremely favourable to agriculture', made the following calculations about it in 1891. In seventeen almost exclusively agricultural French *départements*, where more than two-thirds of the population were employed in agriculture, around 34 francs per capita were received in state taxes each year. This burden gradually increased along with a rise in the industrial population, and in the eight *départements* where more than two-thirds of the population were employed in industry, it amounted to around 97 francs per capita – *three times* as much. In Paris, it was even around *eight times* as much. Coste calculates the total tax burden of the population engaged in agriculture at around 910 million francs, and that of the industrial and urban population at around 2.650 million francs and

hence *three times* as much. Since 1891, indirect taxation has been deployed in France even more. Besides this, meat and grain duties were raised again, so that the tax burden of the industrial population experienced a further increase.[41]

From this book we also draw the following figures, which are characteristic of what economic relations in France looked like before and after 1870. They pertain to specialised trade.

Average annual increases in foreign trade as against the previous five years[42] (in million francs):

Period	Imports	Exports	Total	
1847 to 1856	1,077	1,224	2,301	
1857 to 1861	1,883	2,044	3,927	+14 percent
1862 to 1866	2,518	2,816	5,334	+7 percent
1867 to 1869	3,161	2,897	6,058	+5 percent
1872 to 1876[a]	3,632	3,740	7,372	+4 percent
1877 to 1881	4,467	3,339	7,806	+1 percent
1882 to 1886	4,453	3,355	7,808	+0 percent
1887 to 1891	4,331	3,504	7,835	+0 percent
1892 to 1896	3,881	3,310	7,191	−1 percent

a (Kautsky's footnote): the figures for 1870 and 1871 have been omitted because of the war.

Since 1896, the figures have increased again somewhat. Between 1897 and 1901, imports averaged 4.403 million francs per year, exports 3.877 and 8.280 per year in total. The prosperity of this period was also felt in France. Nevertheless, France was only able to increase the amount of the average total trade per year by around 445 million francs more than the increase between 1887 and 1891.

If we compare the figures decade by decade, we find an average annual foreign trade of 7.876 million francs between 1882 and 1891 and 7.735 million francs between 1892 and 1901; in other words, there is still a decrease of 141

41 (Kautsky's footnote): See Goldstein 1900, pp. 187–8.
42 Ibid., p. 185.

million. The increase in foreign trade between 1897 and 1901 was smaller than the decrease between 1892 and 1896. The stagnation of economic development in recent decades is clearly evident in these figures. That this should be more ascribed to the policy adopted after the war, rather than to the war itself, can be seen from the fact that this stagnation only becomes evident at the end of the 1870s. The stagnation of industry also corresponds to the decline in meat consumption in the cities. According to the agricultural inquiry of 1892, the following amounts of meat were consumed in cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants:

Year	Consumption per capita
1854	47.7 kg
1862	53.9 kg
1867	57.9 kg
1872	55.5 kg
1877	62.3 kg
1882	64.6 kg
1887	60.7 kg
1892	57.0 kg

Subsequent figures show a further decrease in meat consumption in Paris:

Period[a]	Meat consumption per capita
1876 to 1880	76 kg
1881 to 1885	76 kg
1886 to 1890	76 kg
1891 to 1895	73 kg
1896 to 1897	70 kg

a (Kautsky's footnote): this omits the figures for 1878 and 1889, where world fairs created exceptional circumstances.

At the same time there was also a reduction in wheat consumption. In France, this approximately amounted to the following:

Period	Wheat consumption per capita
1862 to 1871 (approx.)	220 litres
1872 to 1881	250 litres
1882 to 1885	285 litres
1886 to 1890	270 litres
1891 to 1894	270 litres
1895 to 1897	245 litres[a]

a Goldstein 1900, pp. 80, 81, 86.

These figures speak for themselves. The fact that France, a country with a population of not even 40 million that is hardly increasing at all, wanted its standing army to remain on an equal footing with Germany and its rapidly growing population of almost 60 million was disastrous by itself – and yet it also wanted to control a colonial territory ten times larger than France itself. If high finance, the bureaucracy, the officers corps and professional politicians do indeed create these policies and benefit from them (wishing as they do to create a solid basis for themselves within the nation by ensuring that the peasants attain special privileges at the cost of the proletariat and eventually at the cost of industry, besieging it and thereby paralysing it), then this means directly ruining the country. If it continues, the policy of the Third Republic will cause France to bleed to death – just as a similar policy on the part of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century absolutist Spain caused that country to bleed to death.

We in Germany, however, have no reason to look down on France superciliously. Because although it is doing it for different reasons, the German Empire is pursuing the same policy; but as it took up this policy somewhat later, it did so with less energy; and because Germany is bigger, and its population is growing more rapidly, it has not yet reaped the same fruits as the Third Republic. However, a few more colonial wars, naval bills and trade agreements will suffice to undermine the robust nature of German industry too. This can happen all the more easily, as – while Germany was the superior industrial competitor to France that emerged in 1871 – the United States is now developing as a competitor to Germany.

CHAPTER 8

Socialism in the Third Republic

How the Bourgeois Republicans Dupe the Workers

If we take a look at the course which events have taken in France since the monarchists have taken possession of it in order to plunder it and use it as a tool of power, adapting it to meet its needs and those of the bourgeoisie – especially of high finance, industrial capitalists, landowners, careerists and professional politicians – then we might be curious as to how to answer the following question: how under these circumstances is the bourgeoisie able to dupe the workers, something it needs far more under the republic than under monarchies?

But lo and behold, the republic itself helps the bourgeoisie out of its embarrassment. The republican idea itself has hitherto proved to be an effective way of furnishing the 'cartel of republican politicians' with the votes they need. At several points in his work, the most recent historian of French socialism, the bourgeois Georges Weill,[1] points to this with contentment:

> Until 1876, politics for the workers exclusively consisted in supporting the Republican Party. The workers, Barberet wrote, silently put up with their lot because the state calls itself a republic. The word has a magical effect on the mind of the worker. This *fata morgana* fills them with hope. The republican bourgeoisie and the proletariat marched arm in arm, united by the same fervour against the monarchy, clericalism and reaction. 'Gone are the days', wrote Renouvier, a republican philosopher, 'when a few socialists, as a rule themselves of bourgeois origin or students, were ill-advised enough in their writing to divide France into two hostile camps – one of the workers and one of the owners of the means of production. This one-sided separation, which in a free society was always wrong and always will be, must definitely vanish today, where the political question – which formerly seemed as if it were solved at all levels – is more important and burning than ever, and will necessarily drive back all others. Today, all

1 Georges Weill (1865–1944) was a historian of socialism and Saint-Simonism in France. Kautsky probably stresses 'the bourgeois' Georges Weill so as to differentiate him from the SPD parliamentarian of the same name.

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> of us – capitalists and workers – are forced to fight for our rights, for our most elementary freedoms, for our consciences'.[2]

The threat posed to the republic from monarchists and clericals – this was what was supposed to unite the workers and the republican bourgeoisie under one banner. Back then, Gambetta's newspaper *La République française* wrote that class hatred represented the greatest danger to the republic. And these ideas break through over and again. Georges Weill comes to this conclusion as well:

> The tendency to form a class party is not available to the French workers: far from seeking isolation, they easily turn against anything that would have the effect of corralling them into a caste. The love of politics drives them into alliance with the bourgeoisie of the left, and its behaviour in elections has often proved this. In 1868, Proudhon advised them to abstain; in 1864, Tolain wanted workers' candidates; and in 1869 Vermorel suggested standing socialist candidates – none of them were listened to. 1885, 1889, 1902 – in all periods of crisis the working-class voters have left the revolutionary organisations and shelved their economic demands in order to vote for the men of the [bourgeois – KK] left and to act in favour of the republic.[3]

From his bourgeois republican point of view, George Weill has every reason to note this phenomenon with contentment – a phenomenon from which his party is drawing great advantage. The question is merely whether the revolutionary proletariat can achieve what it wants to achieve – the safeguarding of the republic and intellectual emancipation from the yoke of the church – if it places the class struggle against capital after the struggle against the monarchists and clericalists.

In France, the struggle of the revolutionary-minded sections of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat against the Church is over two hundred years old. '*Écrasez l'infâme*', cried Voltaire.[4] 'Clericalism is the enemy', Gambetta repeated a century later. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the same battle cry can be heard again in France, and clericalism appears to be more of a threat than ever.

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2 Weill 1904, pp. 188–9.

3 Ibid., p. 455.

4 Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet, 1694–1778), was a French Enlightenment historian and philosopher. The slogan quoted by Kautsky ('crush the infamous') was aimed at the French Church and the nobility.

But does this fact alone not prove that the bourgeoisie is incapable of dealing with the Church, and that the proletariat will burden itself with a labour of Sisyphus if it faithfully follows the bourgeoisie in this struggle and acts as its knave?

Indeed, today the bourgeois liberal politicians have every interest in the *struggle* against the Church, but by no means in triumphing over it. They can only count on the alliance of the proletariat as long as this struggle continues. If it comes to an end, their ally will be transformed into an enemy on the very day the Church goes down. Even in the time of their greatest revolutionary power, the bourgeoisie could not get by for long without the Church. The First Republic had completely put a stop to the Church. Under Napoleon, bourgeois reaction officially reintroduced it.

The Commune of 1871 then made short work of it. But the Third Republic has now been leading a struggle against the Church for three decades without getting anywhere. From time to time, there is a conflict with it, this conflict heats up, the wildest words are exchanged and great legislative acts are prepared: but at the decisive moment the government collapses or it is left in the lurch by the chamber. But if the Church remains in force, then this only happens because it is sure that the two pillars of the monarchical Third Republic – the Senate and the President – will do their duty. If the *Kulturkampf*[5] – which raged in France as much as it did in Germany – came to an end in the 1880s, then this was mainly due to the Senate, which removed the worst fangs from the anti-clerical laws (1880 and 1882). And finally, President Grevy[6] did his bit to ensure that the struggle did not end in a decisive defeat for the Church.

Even today we may no longer expect such a defeat, despite the sharp intensification of the conflict between Church and state in recent years. As recently as May 1903, Combes said in the Chamber that his Church policy was based on 'the loyal and complete observation of the Concordat laws'. Should these laws be broken, then this could only be done by that power that has never ceased to violate the Concordat and to whom all responsibility for its abolition would fall. That did not sound very militant. In vain, the socialists demanded a formal promise from the socialist government that it would prepare the separation

5 Refers to measures taken against the Catholic Church and the influence of Catholicism. In newly-established Germany, this saw many bishops imprisoned or exiled, and led to stringent state intervention in the affairs of the Catholic Church. Bismarck later abandoned this policy when he became aware of the fact that secularists and the growing socialist movement were using the atmosphere created by the *Kulturkampf* in order to question religion's place and role in society as a whole.

6 François Paul Jules Grévy (1807–91) was President of France between 1879–87 and a leading member of the 'Opportunist' Republicans.

of Church and state. If, since then, there has been a rupture between the government and the Church, we can only ascribe this service to the latter. Yet just how easily the government is still failing in relation to clericalism is shown by the case of the teacher Thalamas,[7] who was reprimanded by the government because a few fanatical Catholics felt offended by his teaching. In the chamber, Jaurès spoke against the Minister of Education, but then voted with the majority in favour of him.

We cannot trust such methods and such a majority to deal with a power like the Catholic Church. We may therefore expect that the current struggle against the Church will end in the same way that previous struggles did, or the way the struggle of the Dreyfusards against the army did – a struggle which began as a campaign for the overthrow of militarism and which ended with amnesty for all the criminals of the general staff and the maintenance of their position in the state.

As it would require a separate article, I do not want to go into more detail about how even the abolition of the Concordat and the separation of Church and state would still not signify France's liberation from the former. This is proved by Austria, which abolished the Concordat in 1870, and Belgium, where the Church is independent of the state. In the last instance, the power of the Church lies in the fact that it exercises welfare functions which the capitalist state is unable to obviate the need for, as it necessarily creates a large proletariat which it cannot absorb because military expenditure eats up the state's resources. The power of the Church also lies in the fact that in capitalist society the lower classes feel an ineluctable need for salvation, for better social conditions beyond those of today, which bourgeois liberalism – knowing no other possibility than the capitalist social order – is unable to satisfy. Only the ideal of a socialist society can replace the religious need of the poor for a better world beyond the existing one: only the awareness that the proletariat is destined to be its own saviour can overcome the belief in the religious saviour.

So the only way to emancipate the minds of lower classes from the domination of the Church is by fighting for the socialist ideal, by proletarian class struggle against capitalism and militarism – even if these are supported by bourgeois republicans. The fighting proletariat is the only power that possesses the stubborn will to deal with the Church. Proletarian class struggle is the only

7 Amédée Thalamas (1867–1953) was a professor of history and geography at the Sorbonne in Paris. His lectures on Joan of Arc, which urged students to adopt a more critical-historical understanding of her life and times, sparked a national controversy and clash in parliament. The right attacked him and sought to disrupt his lectures, whereas Jaurès publicly defended him.

way to overcome it. In contrast, bourgeois *Kulturkampf* against the Church will never achieve decisive results and is not interested in such results either. Bourgeois *Kulturkampf* means staving off the proletariat indefinitely. If it means postponing the class struggle until the struggle of bourgeois free-thinking with the Church has been fought out, then this is the very opposite of an effective anti-clerical policy.

The proletariat must indeed support all measures that are capable of weakening the rule of the Church, but in doing so it cannot allow its class organisation and class actions to be impaired. And what is true of the struggle against the Church is true of the struggle for the republic.

The bourgeois republicans have ruled the republic for three decades. And with what success? The republic is said to be at greater risk today than ever before, so that in order to rescue it the proletariat and the bourgeoisie should forget everything that divides them and unite to march against the common enemy.

On what is the threat to the republic based? Not even the keenest eye can discover a single trace of a monarchist pretender, or a serious effort to replace the republic with a monarchy. The republic is only at risk from itself. On the one hand, it is at risk from its *constitution*, which, as we have seen, is quite monarchical and cries out for an individual at its head. But it is also at risk from its capitalist agrarian policy and parliamentary corruption. Having been welcomed as a saviour from the plight of working people, it is the *disappointment* at the republic that threatens it. This disappointment can only be dispelled by transforming the capitalist parliamentary republic and its corruption into a truly social republic, not by preserving it. And only through self-government and the arming of the people can the republic be secured against coup attempts.

If we want to strengthen the propagandist power of the republican idea in France, then we have to show, above all, that the republic we want – the republic that the fighters of 1793, 1848 and 1871 strove to achieve – is fundamentally different from the republic of today, as different from this republic as the last republic was from the monarchy. But we must also ensure that it is impossible to identify us with the 'cartel' of bourgeois business republicans that governs and exploits the republic. If we want to secure the republic, then we must raise, strengthen and make politically independent that class which is alone among all classes of modern society in that it is republican in principle, alone in its willingness to stand up for the republic under any circumstances, to shed its blood for it: the proletariat. So here too we would consider it to be the most perverse policy, if, in order to save the republic, the proletariat were to renounce the defence of its class demands until the threat to the republic had passed, so

as not to weaken the republic through the class struggle. Nothing undermines the republic's foundations more than the renunciation of this class struggle: nothing can lay stronger foundations for the republic than the successful continuation of this struggle.

The more the bourgeois republicans tried to dupe the masses of workers by presenting their next goal solely as that of salvaging the republic in association with the bourgeoisie and fighting the Church by supporting its regimes and its methods, the more socialist propaganda had to confront critically the bourgeois aims and means of struggle in order to show: how little the proletariat would gain from these; that the proletarian republic is different from the bourgeois republic; that the proletarian methods of salvaging the republic and fighting the Church are fundamentally different from those of the bourgeoisie; and that social democracy rejects an alliance with the bourgeois republicans, rejects becoming an accomplice in everything that these forces have done and failed at.

To do this it was also necessary to criticise the revolutionary tradition, which most worked towards making the proletarians the followers of the bourgeois republicans and estranging them from their own historical tasks. The revolutionary tradition leads to the view that the proletariat of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has no other task than to continue the revolution of the eighteenth century, to take it up where it left off. But this revolution was a *bourgeois* revolution – even during the time of terror the proletariat played no special role and was merely the most energetic and most ruthless champion of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois interests and ideas. Back then, the struggle against the monarchy and the clergy necessarily took first place, and the struggle against capital came a mere second: if an independent proletarian policy was still impossible, then the proletariat had to form the followers of the petty bourgeoisie and its ideologues, and often those of the bourgeoisie too. Seeking to shape the ideas and tasks of the revolution of the eighteenth century into living forces of the proletarian movement today means keeping the proletariat in its stage of infancy, in dependence and ignorance about its own historical tasks. From the standpoint of the bourgeois republicans, this revolutionary tradition is invaluable, for it alone allows them to 'dupe the workers' in France, something which they need so much and which will become all the more difficult as class antagonisms become more acute. This tradition is one of the biggest obstacles to proletarian socialism.

The Three Tendencies of the Socialist Movement

In light of this situation, the task of the French socialists was obvious: in order to make the proletariat politically independent and detach it from the liberal bourgeoisie, they had above all to confront the republican superstition, which in France assumes various forms: the superstition that the republic as such signifies a mitigation of the class rule of the bourgeoisie; that today's Third Republic is a realisation of the republican ideal that the proletarian masses have had in their heads since 1793; that because it shares the same name then its essence is the same too. And finally, the republican superstition that the republic is endangered by anything other than its own grievances, than by its own means of rule, and that the struggle should not be about rescuing it from anything other than these means of rule, as if the republic's existence could be secured in any other way than through the abolition of these means of rule.

But then the French socialists would have had to criticise the revolutionary tradition, to counter it with the new doctrine of class struggle based on the theoretical study of the modern production process and the resultant insight into the needs, powers and responsibilities of social development in general and the proletariat in particular. In other words: the doctrine of Marxism.

As far back as 1850, in his articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and then in the *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx criticised the 'traditional superstition of 1793'.[8] In the First International, he then constantly strove to oppose this revolutionary tradition with the recognition of the proletarian class struggle. But back then this tradition was still too deeply rooted in France. Thanks to particularly favourable historical conditions, a modern proletarian movement became a mass movement in Germany earlier than in France. This movement was based on conscious class struggle and was independent from the traditions and slogans of the bourgeois revolution. Only when it had achieved great success there did the scientific explanation of the doctrine of class struggle and tactics based upon it become established in France.

Thus it was the German model that gave the new French social democracy its character. But it would be a mistake to see the doctrine of the class struggle itself as being of German origin. Insofar as we can name one nation in particular, we must deem *France* to be its country of origin. *French* historians were the first who observed the fact of the class struggle, *French* socialists were the first to recognise the proletarian class struggle and it was in *France* that Marx became acquainted with these observations and facts. But, of course, he was the first

8 Marx 1891 [1875]; Marx 1975–2004c.

to transform these observations into a theory by deepening them through German philosophy and English political economy; the first to raise class-struggle socialism to a science by replacing its sentimental explanation of the difference between rich and poor, of exploiters and exploited, with an understanding of the capitalist production process and of the different roles and historic tasks of the classes taking part in that production – thereby transforming the socialist goal from a demand born out of a sense of an injustice or mere proletarian disgust into an outcome of scientific research.

This scientific socialism is international not only in character but also in origin: Marx was only able to establish it because he was as much at home in the social and political life of France as he was in that of Germany and England. The doctrine of the proletarian class struggle has found its origins in France, its theoretical justification in England and its most complete and extensive practical application in Germany, thanks to the peculiar circumstances in the latter country.

Among those who have contributed most to taking this doctrine from Germany and replanting it in France, and to basing the new French socialism on it are two men in particular: *Jules Guesde* and *Eduard Vaillant*.[9] Guesde was one of the keenest and most talented of the young socialists who intervened in the French workers' movement when it started to revive following the fall of the Commune. He gathered around him many French workers and also many foreigners in Paris, amongst them German comrades. Of these, it was *Karl Hirsch* who exerted the greatest influence on him. Previously, Hirsch had been the editor of the first socialist daily in Germany, *Bürger- und Bauernfreund*,[10] which first appeared in 1870. In 1876 he had moved to Paris, where he joined with Guesde and made him familiar with the views of Karl Marx and the tactics of German social democracy. Then, thanks to republican freedom, just like many other socialists before and after him he was of course deported from France in 1878 – such deportations still occurred under Millerand! But now Guesde had become acquainted with Lafargue, and through him with Marx and Engels themselves, and he became their trusted and valued friend. Guesde also came into contact with other German social democrats, such as Liebknecht. The workers' party he founded in 1879 (*Parti Ouvrier Français*) was based on Marxism from the outset.

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9 Édouard Vaillant (1840–1913) was a deputy of the Paris Commune and member of the French Chamber of Deputies during the Third Republic.

10 One of the first social-democratic newspapers in Germany, founded by the head of the so-called 'Red Postal Service', Julius Motteler (1838–1907) and Wilhelm Stolle (1842–1918) in 1870.

Initially, the Blanquists were only able to exercise little influence on the resurgent workers' movement. Their leader had been in jail since 1871, the party's other protagonists were in exile. The aged Blanqui was not pardoned until 1879 and was already dead in 1881. Meanwhile, however, the growing onslaught of the proletariat had wrung a general amnesty from the bourgeois republicans, which allowed the fugitives from the Commune – and with them some of the more prominent Blanquists such as Eudes[11] and Vaillant – to return to France. They continued the party that had recently been founded by Blanqui, the *Parti Socialiste Révolutionnaire*. It became a new party not only in name. The defeat of the Commune had shaken the old Blanquism down to its foundations, because the experience had clearly shown that the tactic of conquering Paris by a coup, and thereby ruling France, had become completely hopeless. Before thinking about the conquest of political power it was necessary to establish a firm footing in the whole of France, to organise the proletariat everywhere and to make it strong and mature. Increasingly the practice of the Blanquists drew closer to that of the Marxists, with whom they cooperated on all important questions. Soon they differed essentially only in their geographical distribution and their relations with neighbouring socialist tendencies. The Blanquists were centred in Paris, the Marxists in the industrial cities of the provinces, especially in the North. As with their behaviour towards the anarchists in the 1890s and later towards the ministerial socialists, the Marxists often proved much more brusque and dismissive towards neighbouring tendencies than did the Blanquists, who in their objective refutations were actually more conciliatory, only deciding on a split if all other possibilities of arriving at an agreement had been exhausted. This difference probably arose from the fact that originally the *Parti Ouvrier* was based on more of a consistent theory than the *Parti Socialiste Revolutionnaire* was.

Still, for all the minor differences, the goals and tactical methods of both organisations were for the most part the same as far back as two decades ago. Their formal merger as the *Parti Socialiste de France* at the Ivry congress on 8 November 1901 was for me the final confirmation of a factual agreement that had already occurred a long time ago.

Today we can only speak of *Blanquists* in the sense of Blanqui's *pupils*, not in the sense of continuators of the old tactics which Blanqui himself had abandoned at the end of his life. In the *Annuaire du Parti Socialiste Revolutionnaire*[12] it says, for example:

11 Emil Eudes (1843–88).

12 Dubreuilh and Chaboseau (eds.) n.d., (Kautsky does not provide a page number).

> The tactics of our party … consist of incessantly speeding up the progress of calling reforms into being, of promoting social development. Although we prefer to march rapidly towards our final goal, the social republic, and although the means that most quickly achieve this are those most welcome to us, we naturally prefer slow progress to stagnation or retrogression. We therefore rise up with all our might against all reactionary endeavours and work incessantly at winning every possible reform from bourgeois society, however small it may be.[13]

In that you will find nothing of what is usually understood to be Blanquism. Of those who worked most to reform the Blanquist party along these lines, we should first and foremost mention Eduard Vaillant, who from 1866 studied medicine in Heidelberg, Tübingen and Vienna. But, especially in the latter city, he also studied German socialism, until the war summoned him to France, where he also played an active part in the Commune. The fall of the Commune drove him to England, where he entered into personal contact with German socialists. Among the French, he to this day remains one of the best connoisseurs of socialist literature from abroad.

But if Vaillant and Guesde, and through them their organisations, contributed much to making the class-warfare tactics of German social democracy at home in France, they did so not by slavishly imitating them but by adapting them in accordance with France's changed circumstances. Just like German social democracy, they counterposed the proletarian method of struggle to that of bourgeois *Kulturkampf*, which for all the noise it makes does not get anywhere. But when, alongside this, the French socialists also campaigned against republican superstitions, this was an activity in which German social democracy had not the slightest reason to engage. For the French socialists, fighting republican superstitions and the revolutionary tradition was from the outset a necessity imposed on them by surrounding conditions, and Guesde in particular always emphasised these aspects most sharply in his agitation – to the approval of all German socialists who knew anything about it.

The work of both socialist organisations was onerous. Only slowly did they succeed in rallying the masses around them: every time they took a great step forwards, a political situation arose which once again led large proletarian masses or organisations into an alliance with the bourgeois republicans. Thus the emergence of Boulangism[14] drove the Possibilists into government. Already

13 Ibid., p. 59.

14 A reference to the populist movement spearheaded by the French general, Georges Ernest Boulanger (1837–91), which gained a mass following among those alienated by the

in 1882 a section of the *Parti Ouvrier* led by Brousse[15] had taken a new direction opposed to that of Guesde, which led to a split in the workers' party. The Broussistes, or Possibilists, championed the autonomy of local organisations over organisational centralisation ('freedom of criticism'[16] – that is to say, the relaxation of party discipline) as well as the restriction of the party programme to what could be achieved for the time being. This opened the door to all kinds of wangling with the ruling parties, which eventually went so far that – when the emergence of Boulanger created the impression that the republic was in danger, and when the old call for the unity of all republicans could be heard with renewed vigour – the Possibilists allied with the bourgeois republicans in a 'bloc', even allowing their publications to be paid for by secret government funds.

At this point, both the Blanquists and the Guesdists opposed these goings-on in the strongest terms, with the full approval of German social democracy. In 1889, the hostility between both camps was such that they were not even able to get together for an international congress. The Possibilists held their own congress, and German social democracy, just like most socialist organisations from the other countries, met together with the Marxists and the Blanquists.

When Boulangism blew over, so too did the tactic of seeking blocs. The Possibilists drew closer to the tactics of the proletarian class struggle, but they also lost a tremendous amount of votes. The tactic of seeking blocs caused universal disgust among the proletariat and brought the main section of the Possibilists under the leadership of Allemane; in 1890 they separated from Brousse to form their own group, named after their leader.[17] This group fell into the opposite extreme by underestimating parliamentarism. Alongside them, the two other socialist organisations regained increasing influence. The number of their parliamentary deputies grew, and attracted by this new power, numerous radical deputies joined them; however, they did so as 'independent' socialists, without affiliating to a party organisation.

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parliamentary corruption of the Third Republic and which, somewhat strangely given its *revanchist* nationalism, enthused socialists such as Paul Lafargue.

15 Paul Brousse (1844–1912) was initially an anarchist who later embraced the politics of municipal and reformist socialism which was based on an alliance with the Radicals. At the Saint-Étienne Congress of the *Parti Ouvrier* he was part of the majority that formed the Socialist Federation of Socialist Workers of France, otherwise known as the Possibilists.

16 'Freedom of criticism' [*Meinungsfreiheit*] was a watchword of reformist socialism in the Second International. Both Lenin and Kautsky struggled against it; cf., for one example, the chapter devoted to this matter in Lenin's *What is to be Done*? (cf. Lih 2008, pp. 681–99).

17 The Revolutionary Socialist Workers' Party, founded by Jean Allemane (1843–1935).

The strength of each of the parties is shown by the following, if only approximately correct, number of votes to the Chamber elections (according to Kritchevsky in *Die Neue Zeit*):[18]

	1893	1898
Guesdists	247,742	382,426
Allemanists	72,241	42,145
Blanquists	30,000	60,906
Independent Socialists	87,000	354,411
Total	436,983	839,888

A glowing increase, but worrying in that the lion's share of the votes fell to the independent socialists. The latest swing in the vote is also said to come from them.

The colossal growth of proletarian socialism made 'duping the workers' urgently necessary for the bourgeois republicans – more than ever before. Once again they found themselves compelled to save the republic and to fight the priests: but they had already given up on formally winning the workers from socialism through these means and shackling the workers to their tatty banner. They were compromised too much and had lost all credibility amongst the proletariat. There was now only one way of exploiting the proletariat's power for bourgeois ends – to win the socialist parliamentary deputies to carry out those bourgeois policies which the bourgeois republicans had already become too weak to carry out by themselves. Since they could no longer kill off socialism, they sought to tame it and make it subservient to them.

The Dreyfus affair created favourable soil for this experiment, the independent socialists the most suitable material for forming the new alliance. The goodies and influence which accrued to the deputies of ministerial socialism as a result were so seductive that even many a deputy who had until then belonged to a party organisation was tempted into saying adieu to party discipline and leaving his old organisation. The *Parti Socialiste Française*, founded in 1900 and now known as the *Jaurèsistes*, then created an organisation which included the 'independent' socialists, but actually made the parliamentary fraction inde-

18 Kritchevsky 1898, p. 469.

pendent of the party and the individual parliamentary deputies, something that the last congress only marginally altered.

The tendencies of the new socialist school of thought created in this way were well characterised by Millerand in a speech he gave on 3 December 1902 in Paris. At this point, Millerand was not yet the office hunter and careerist who had been expelled from the party, but was universally acclaimed – including by German revisionism – as an advocate of the 'new method' that was supposed to regenerate socialism. Among other things, he said:

> In his remarkable work *Socialisme d'opposition, Socialisme du Gouvernement*,[19] my friend Josef Sarraute demonstrated with great clarity and vigour how the idea of class struggle in today's society is as wrong as it is dangerous if it is isolated from its completion, from the solidarity of the classes …
>
> No money, no reforms. For it is also the imperative duty of socialist deputies to examine all chapters of the budget with scrupulous vigilance. And I think they will find it a little childish if, after discussing and voting on all these details, you reject the budget in its entirety or abstain from voting on it under the pretence of orthodoxy.
>
> The growth of the country's productive forces and wealth, the exploitation of its natural resources and of its *colonial possessions* are questions that are just as vital for the workers.
>
> Yes, the French people, *all of the French people, have the same interest in France being rich*, in being strong – not merely through its alliances, its *military and financial power*, but also through the *prestige* acquired in the world by a great nation which is completely peaceful and determined to only use its power in the service of justice.[20]

Thus the physiognomy of socialist democracy is clearly characterised – it differs from all other parties in its primal concern for the workers' movement and economic emancipation, and is connected to the revolutionary tradition, republican institutions and the other republican parties through its clear understanding of political needs, which are its living conditions. It thus strives to unite in a common course of action those democrats that are better informed about labour questions and those socialists that have arrived at better insight into the obligations of a great democracy that wants to be vibrant.

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19 Sarraute 1901.

20 (Kautsky's footnote): Reprinted in Millerand 1903, p. 54.

To shed further light on these remarks would take too long, and is also unnecessary. Only one point should be stressed, as it can easily be misunderstood – the reference to the united interest of all classes in their country being rich. True, all classes have such an interest – but at the same time they do not actually have the *same* interest, for everybody understands something different by *wealth*. The wealth of the worker consists of high wages and cheap food, but this forcefully collides with the wealth of the capitalist, which consists of high profits and low wages as well as of property with high rents and high food prices. Or do we not want to grasp wealth socially, but *materially* instead, in the quantity of products? Well, overproduction is the problem of the modern economy, and bourgeois economists praise the cartels because they restrict the production of products and thus the production of wealth. And for the vast majority of French politicians, an abundance of food in France is synonymous not with the country's wealth, but its poverty. As Destutt de Tracy[21] said nearly a hundred years ago, the rich countries are those in which the people are poor, and *vice versa*. The bourgeoisie saw class antagonisms better than the socialist minister who wanted to convince the proletarians of the solidarity of the classes, which would oblige them to colonialism and militarism – albeit with the caveat that the sword would only be drawn 'in the service of justice'. As if the Tsar would not deploy this phrase as soon as he started a war!

Millerand spoke even more clearly in front of the capitalists than he did in front of the workers. On 22 June 1900, in front of 600 capitalists who were gathered at the banquet of the Republican Committee for Trade and Industry, he declared:

> From now on we will no longer be arming the people and the bourgeoisie against each other, the workers and the Republican industrialists, who have the same origins. If the government had achieved nothing other than to prove the necessity of the alliance between bourgeois and worker, then it would have not only done the republic a service of which it could be proud, but the country too.[22]

This policy is equivalent to what Mr Levy was describing in the book we have cited above in praise of Millerand, where he enthused about the alliance between Waldeck-Rousseau the opportunist and Millerand the socialist, writing:

21 Antoine Louis Claude Destutt, comte de Tracy (1754–1836) was a French philosopher.
22 Quoted in Vérecque 1904 (Kautsky does not provide a page reference).

> This agreement demonstrates the political spirit which animates the two great fractions of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: it testifies to a new, and we hope definitive, direction in our country's politics.
>
> From now on an *unbreakable bond* ties the republican *bourgeoisie*, which believes that the best way of ensuring social peace is the timely provision of necessary reforms, to that faction of the *socialist* party – by far its most important one – which, guided by the ideal of its principles, endeavours to gain from the republic an act of *kindness and fairness* for the people on a daily basis.[23]

Ministerial socialism's attempts to galvanise the traditions of the Great Revolution were in keeping with this. The socialist movement was portrayed as the consummator of the revolution's principles. The programme agreed upon by the new party at the Tours Congress of 1902 said: 'Historically, and since the French Revolution, the workers have understood that *the declaration of human rights* will remain illusory without a social transformation of property'. Back then, Gabriel Deville said: 'Our principles are the true realisation of human rights … I pledge myself to derive our whole theory from human rights'.

In this way, this newest phase of socialism, beyond the 'outdated' Marx, was founded on the human rights of 1789, on the thought processes of nascent liberalism. We have already acquainted ourselves with enough examples of the practice based on these theories.

But the more that such a strong section of the socialist deputies and their hangers-on in the constituencies drew closer to bourgeois democracy and fell for ministerialism, the more the backlash of this could be felt among the mass of the fighting proletariat

It is worth noting that every time the tactics of state socialism or the merger of socialists and bourgeois democrats comes about, it is followed by an anti-statist and anti-parliamentary current. We have seen how in France, after the battle of June, Proudhon came to the fore amongst the working masses in the place of Louis Blanc. The bloody week of May not only put a stop to the Commune, but also to Proudhonism (at least amongst the militant socialist proletariat); that is to say, it put a stop to the belief that the proletariat could be emancipated through small, peaceful means and establish a new form of society. After the Commune, the terrorist anarchism of Bakunin blossomed in place of peaceful anarchism amongst the socialists in the Romance countries. Initially, Bakuninism was prone to putsches, but when the hopelessness

23 Ibid., p. xi.

of these became more and more apparent, it preached the individualist propaganda of the deed. When the French Possibilists then formed a bloc with the bourgeois republicans against Boulangism, the propaganda of the deed thrived as its counterpart. The period between 1892 (Ravachol)[24] and 1894 (Caserio)[25] is the high point of violent anarchism in France.

The powerful growth of Marxism phased this anarchism out, but socialist ministerialism allowed a new form of anti-parliamentarism to emerge, albeit in a far higher and more sympathetic form than the propaganda of the deed: the propagation of the *general strike* – not as a means of pressure which, if all other means fail, can complement and support parliamentarism, but as a normal means of action to render superfluous the proletariat's participation in parliamentary struggles. From the outset, Jules Guesde could be counted among those who opposed the general strike in this sense, whereas it was precisely the later *Jaurèsistes* who flirted with it. The extremes met.

The roots of anti-parliamentary general strike-ism [*Generalstreiklerei*] can be found first in the strengthening of the trade-union movement, but also in the growing disgust at parliamentary corruption and the attendant parliamentary cretinism, which loses all feeling and all interest for the masses in struggle and does not measure its actions by how they affect these struggles, but by the influence they can have on parliamentary scheming. The last Bourges Congress[26] clearly showed the extent to which the mass of organised workers are imbued with an interest in the general strike and in revolutionary, anti-parliamentary action. These tendencies of the French trade unionists are deeply rooted in the circumstances around them. Such tendencies had to become stronger to the extent that ministerialism grew amongst the socialist deputies, because the contradiction between the delusions of the latter concerning the solidarity of the classes in the republic, and the reality of sharpening class antagonisms, which became most evident especially in the republic, become all the more glaring.

But even if the anti-parliamentarism of the general strike-ists is understandable, it is nonetheless completely wrong. Certainly, the socialist deputies in the Chamber are powerless without the pressure of the working masses from out-

24 Ravachol (François Claudius Koenigstein, 1859–92) was a French anarchist who was guillotined after having been convicted of the targeted bombing of members of the French judiciary in protest at their treatment of the Communards of 1871.

25 Refers to the Italian anarchist, Sante Geronimo Caserio (1873–94), who assassinated Marie François Sadi Carnot, then President of the French Third Republic.

26 A reference to the 1904 Bourges Congress of the CGT trade-union federation, which saw clashes between the 'reformist' supporters of Jaurès and the syndicalist delegates.

side, but it is just as certain that the power of these masses are in need of a tool within parliament if this pressure is to develop into legislative action, and this tool can only reliably and purposefully be formed by a strong socialist fraction in parliament. On the other hand, it is certain that the parliamentary system is a bourgeois means of rule which has the tendency to transform all deputies – even the anti-bourgeois ones – from servants of the people into servants of the bourgeoisie. However, the less the proletariat concerns itself with the parliamentarians, the greater this danger becomes and the more the proletariat gives the parliamentarians free rein by turning its back on them in anger and contempt.

The press works like parliamentarism. The press is also a capitalist instrument of rule, and everywhere it also exhibits the tendency to make journalists masters of the people and servants of capital. There is an innate tendency in journalism to act in the same corrupting fashion as parliamentarianism. But, of course, the general strike-ists will not preach the rejection of the press because of this. The press is one of the bourgeoisie's instruments of rule, but it is also an instrument of power of the proletariat, without which it cannot conduct its class struggle. Possessing its own strong press is one of the preconditions of the proletariat's conquest of political power. Here, the task of the proletariat does not lie in empty outrage about the venality of the press, but in subjecting it to proletarian discipline. The same is true of parliamentarism. As obvious as its dangers are, parliamentarism is necessary, and parliamentary cretinism, parliamentary corruption and impotence cannot be fought by trite indignation – they too can only be fought by subjecting the deputies to the discipline of the organised proletariat.

The cancerous sore of the socialist movement in France is the 'freedom of criticism' of the socialist journalists and deputies, their independence from the proletarian organisations and the possibility that their policies clash with these organisations. Only this made ministerialism possible. And if the mass of the organised proletariat is once again to gain confidence in the socialist parliamentary deputies, then this indiscipline must be eliminated – as well as the bloc tactics. During the merger, the *Conféderation du Travail* should just as much be taken into consideration as the two political parties – the *Parti Socialiste de France* and the *Parti Socialiste Française*. Winning the masses in the *Conféderation du Travail* is at the very least as necessary as merging the two political organisations. And uniting the latter would cause more harm than good if this happened under conditions which repelled the majority of the workers organised in the trade unions, instead of imbuing them with renewed confidence in the reliability of their representatives in parliament and in the party press.

Just like in 1848, today we are dealing with not two but three tendencies in the French socialist movement which exhibit some affinity to those of Blanqui, Louis Blanc and Proudhon. Yet they are no longer as divided as those tendencies were, and have more in common. The spokesmen of all three parties invoke Marx. Of course, two of these only do so to some extent and seek to 'amend' Marx – the one tendency through the immortal principles of 1789 and 1793, the other by placing economics over politics and underestimating the significance of state power, completely in the Proudhonist fashion. The *Parti Socialiste de France* retains the goal of conquering political power that it took from Blanquism. But in doing so it overcame the bias of original Blanquism and assimilated activity in trade unions and cooperatives, as well as participation in the legislative process for purposes of social reform. Socialist ministerialism means the revival and modernisation of Louis Blanc's practical standpoint, which was amalgamated with Marxism – just as the anti-parliamentarism of the general strike-ists represents the transformation of Proudhonism from a petty bourgeois standpoint to a proletarian one, from a peaceful one to a revolutionary one.

In the interests of French socialism it is urgently necessary to abolish the one-sidedness of both of these tendencies. This can only occur on the basis of Marxism, towards which the resolutions of the Amsterdam congress have pointed all over again.

This is the current situation of socialism in France. I had to write at some length to uncover its historical roots, but I hope that I have succeeded in doing this, and that I have been able to show that the splits in French socialism are not, as some critics have explained with an air of superiority, to be found in the intolerance and jealousy of one or other of the leading comrades, but arise from conditions themselves – conditions which date back to the Great Revolution and which, therefore, could not always be easily overcome.

I have hopefully also succeeded in showing that Guesde's propaganda against republican superstitions and against the traditions of the revolution is nothing unprecedented; that this was a necessity from the inception of socialist propaganda after the fall of the Commune on; and that German socialism had approved of this from the outset, because it sprang from transferring German class-struggle tactics and making them correspond to French conditions.

Finally, we have seen that criticising republican superstitions by no means leads to indifference towards the state form. Rather, precisely because we attribute great importance to the state form for the class struggle of the proletariat, we have to fight against a state form such as the Third Republic, in which the class currently ruling is armed with all the centralised monarchy's instruments of rule. Smashing these to bits, not strengthening them, is one of

the most important tasks of French social democracy. The Third Republic, as presently constituted, offers no ground for the emancipation of the proletariat, but only for its oppression. It is only when the French state is transformed along the lines of the constitution of the First Republic and the Commune that it can become that form of the republic, that form of government, for which the French proletariat has been working, fighting and shedding blood for over one hundred and ten years.[27]

27 Many thanks to Jacob Richter for helping me to scan the original German text.

PART 3

Karl Kautsky, The Development of a Marxist (*1924*)

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I

I gladly meet the invitation to provide a characterisation of my life work with a particular focus on my economic views. My life work is nearing its end, and if a summary of this work is to come from me then it is time to take up this task.

The state into which I was born no longer exists. It was wrecked by the storms of 1918. Yet already in my youth it was in a process of decline and decay, and this profoundly influenced my own development. My very own lineage was a mirror image of the hodgepodge of nationalities in the Austrian empire. I was born on 16 October 1854 in Prague, the son of a Czech father and a German mother. My mother's father was Viennese, but his father came from Hungary (I suspect from Croatia) and was married to an Italian woman. My mother's mother was from Lower Austria. My father's father was Czech, but his mother was of Polish origin.

My father was of a Czech nationalist mindset. By contrast, my mother's father lived for almost two decades in Prague without learning a word of Czech. At that point, Prague was still a German city in terms of its vernacular. In 1848 my grandfather took up the cause of the Germans *vis-à-vis* the Czechs with such decisiveness that when rebellious Prague was bombarded by Windisch-Grätz,[1] the agitated Czechs placed him in terrible hardship.

The reaction then hit Czechs and Germans equally hard, and at times the common hatred of the police regime partly bridged over the national antagonisms. It was during this period that my parents got married. I was their first child.

I grew up in hatred of the absolutist regime, but also with contempt for the state itself, the viability of which hardly anybody from the Germans or the Czechs – at least in the circles which formed my immediate environment – believed in, following the blows of 1859 and 1866[2] and the rise of national antagonisms which were intensifying day by day.

My first political idea was the idea of the nation. I was filled with Czech nationalism, and the most radical, Hussite, kind at that. Yet from the outset I had not been one-sidedly Czech nationalist. My mother tongue was German, as was my mother's. Having moved to Vienna at the age of nine, I grew up there in a wholly German environment. So, from 1866 on, I began to have national feelings

1 Alfred I, Prince of Windisch-Grätz (1787–1862) declared martial law in Bohemia to suppress the armed insurrection of Czech separatists in Prague in June 1848.

2 'The blows of 1859 and 1866' refer to two military defeats suffered by Austria – against France and Prussia respectively.

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for the Germans in Austria insofar as I desired their reunification with the other Germans in a republic. In this sense I sympathised with the national cause of the Hungarians and the Italians. I revered Kossuth[3] and above all Garibaldi.[4] I hoped that they would destroy Austria.

This indeterminate political emotional life, which of course was rather childishly formed, was then struck by the Franco-Prussian war. I stood on the side of Garibaldi. I was enthused first by the French Republic and then the Paris Commune. In so doing, however, I came across an element that until then had been completely alien to me, but henceforth captivated me with all its might: socialism. Associated with socialism was the idea of internationality.

From the beginning, my national vein had not been configured to a single nation alone. It thus cost me no effort to arrive at international thought; not a thought which shows no interest in, or understanding for, the idea of nationality, but which attempts to accommodate each nationality with equal interest and understanding, which wishes to offer each of them a thriving home on this earth through the free and joyful interaction of all.

Socialism gave me more to do. What I learned about socialism from newspapers did not provide a clear picture. Back then it was impossible to get hold of really informative literature on socialism in Austria unless you were particularly fortunate, and this stroke of luck evaded me.

Since my interest in socialism had emanated from the uprising in Paris, that is to say from France, I snatched at everything that I could find out about socialism in French-language literature. The socialist novels of George Sand[5] made the deepest impression on me. Not that they offered much by way of clarity about socialism. They were truly not suitable for that, yet they gave me strength and confidence. What I had been able to learn about socialism from individual intimations off my own bat was of course highly muddled and the subject of much scorn in my surrounding environment; the socialist movement as a whole was treated with such disparagement in these circles that I was unable to rid myself of doubts and concerns about it.

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3 Lajos Kossuth (1802–94) was Regent-President of the Kingdom of Hungary during the 1848–9 revolution. He demanded parliamentary government for Hungary and constitutional government for the rest of Austria.

4 Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–82) was a pivotal military and political figure both in the revolutions of 1848–9 and later in the unification of Italy. In 1849 he led the defence of Rome against a French force sent by Charles-Louis Napoléon Bonaparte.

5 George Sand (Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin, 1804–76) was a successful French novelist who was also active in the 1848–9 upheavals, establishing her own newspaper, which was published by a workers' co-operative.

Then I saw how George Sand, who back then was most highly revered universally, threw her lot in with socialism. This gave me the most exhilarating confidence.

I acquired some positive knowledge of socialism when Louis Blanc's historical works fell into my hands – *Histoire de la révolution française* (*The History of the Great Revolution*) *Histoire de dix ans* (*The History of Ten Years*) and finally *Histoire de la révolution de 1848* (*The History of the 1848 Revolution*).[6]

However, what I could glean from them in terms of socialism was still very unclear and sentimental. This did not change until 1874, when I got hold of the Austrian party's newspaper, *Die Gleichheit*.[7] I now became aware of German socialist literature, initially in the form of Lassalle's writings, but I equally became aware of the need to study political economy.

II

It was not until 1874 that I attended university in Vienna. My time in secondary school was disagreeably extended by an illness and its aftermath. I enrolled in the Faculty of Philosophy. Soon after, in January 1875, I joined the Social Democratic Party. From then through to today my activity has been divided between scientific thought [*Wissenschaft*] and politics, theory and practice. It is not up to me to judge whether the one aspect of my work stimulated or restricted the other. I am inclined to think that the close connection between theory and practice was useful to me, providing many an insight which would have been closed off from one-sided theory or practice. In this exposition I am only to concentrate on the development of my scientific thought, not my political development. Yet I cannot entirely refrain from discussing the latter as well – it was too great an influence on my scientific thought.

Following a glowing period of growth, the party in Vienna was in rapid decline at that time. There was nobody in its ranks who could have guided me intellectually. Yet I was also unable to find anybody among my colleagues and professors at the university who had even touched upon the problems which occupied me, let alone showed any interest in them. Given my feelings of insig-

6 Blanc 1846; Blanc 1847–69; Blanc 1870.

7 *Die Gleichheit: politische Zeitschrift für die Interessen des arbeitenden Volkes* (*Equality: Political Newspaper for the Interests of the Working People*) was founded in Vienna in 1870, but was banned in 1877. Following the death of his father, Victor Adler (1852–1918) used some of his inheritance to finance a new version of *Die Gleichheit*, known under its full name as *Equality: a Social-Democratic Weekly*, which he founded in December 1886.

nificance, I did not dare to contact the preeminent socialists outside of Austria. I thus sought my path in scientific thought alone, without any guidance.

Even in secondary school historical assignments had absorbed me the most. I decided to become a historian and principally attended lectures on history, especially those given by professors Max Büdinger[8] and Ottokar Lorenz.[9] Yet I was not content with simply presenting history. I was looking for a theory of it, for a principle which drove the historical process forward. Since nobody provided me with such a theory, with all the rashness of youth I immediately drew up a bold plan to write a history of the world all by myself at the age of 21. And since this of course would mean beginning with Egypt, Mesopotamia and India, I went about studying their history.

In addition to the study of history, I also occupied myself with the natural sciences. In the 1870s, Darwinism[10] captivated the whole of the educated world. I enthusiastically accepted it and my theory of history was to be nothing other than the application of Darwinism to the development of society.

It roughly amounted to the theory developed by professor Gumplowicz in his 1883 book *The Struggle of Races*.[11] Of course, I had no idea about this book around 1876. And by the time Gumplowicz published it, I had already progressed from my original point of view to another one. Alongside history and Darwinism, however, socialism also demanded its rights. It drove me to study economics.

I immediately got down to Marx's *Capital* but failed completely and turned away from it, disheartened, until I remembered that the book actually strove to be 'a critique of political economy' and that I first of all had to learn how to understand political economy before reading *Capital*. The stuffy Roscher[12]

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8 Max Büdinger (1828–1902) was a German-Austrian historian and professor of general history at the University of Vienna, a post he took up after becoming a Catholic.

9 Ottokar Lorenz (1832–1904) was a German-Austrian historian and genealogist who taught at the University of Vienna.

10 Saage 2012 provides an interesting overview of the relationship between Darwinism and social democracy.

11 Ludwig Gumplowicz (1838–1909) was a Polish jurist and political scientist who is counted amongst the founders of modern European sociology. He also wrote extensively on issues of the state and administration in Austria, something that also occupied Kautsky throughout his career. Kautsky is referring to Gumplowicz 1883.

12 Wilhelm Georg Friedrich Roscher (1817–94) was a German economist who was influential in the formation of the so-called 'historical school' of political economy in German academia. Between 1854 and 1894 he composed a five-volume overview of political economy, the first volume of which has been translated into English under the title *Principles of Political Economy*. For a brief comment of the impact of the 'historical school' on Kautsky's understanding of imperialism and global power politics, see Macnair (ed.) 2011, pp. 10–12.

was the first economic textbook I could get hold of. As a first introduction it was very useful, but it struck me as too dry. Things were quite different with Adam Smith and [David] Ricardo, whose works I then went through, as well as those of John Stuart Mill. Then at the height of his fame, Mill, like Buckle,[13] occupied me much more than Marx did for years. On the other hand, I was also interested in the counterpart of the Englishmen – Carey,[14] who was also read widely in the 1870s – and in his prophet Dühring.[15] Yet I was always critical of their one-sidedness and even had an aversion to Dühring's work because of its excessive arrogance and barrenness. I was all the more taken by another German professor, Schäffle,[16] who in the years of the Anti-Socialist Law[17] had been close to socialism. Alongside him there was also Albert Lange.[18] I was not interested in his philosophy (I was an inveterate materialist) but in his social views, which had so many points of contact with Mill and Darwin.

Darwinism was also my first work's point of departure. In Malthus[19] I had found much to object to, but with Darwin I recognised that living organ-

13 Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–62) was an English historian who is best known for his extremely ambitious yet incomplete work, *History of Civilisation in England*. Buckle treated history as an exact science and influenced Kautsky in his early years.

14 Henry Charles Carey (1793–1879) was an 'American School' economist who favoured economic protectionism for the development of domestic industry.

15 Eugen Dühring (1833–1921) was a philosopher and economist who taught at the University of Berlin before being dismissed after a clash with the authorities. He was a fierce critic of Marxism and dialectics. He invented highly regimented ideas for 'the state of the future' and there was an underlying anti-Semitism in his thought. He is known mainly through Friedrich Engels's *Anti-Dühring*, which was occasioned by some of Dühring's ideas becoming popular in the German workers' movement (Engels 1959 [1877]).

16 Albert Schäffle (1831–1903) was a sociologist, lecturer at Vienna and other universities, politician and for a few months in 1871 Austrian minister for trade and agriculture. He later influenced Bismarck's decision to carry out social reforms, particularly workers' insurance.

17 The Anti-Socialist Law (1878–90) was introduced by Otto von Bismarck as part of his two-pronged strategy to counter the influence of social democracy. On the one hand there was state paternalism, social insurance and reform, but on the other came this legislation which banned socialist organisations, meetings and publications. This notwithstanding, the German social democrats could still stand for election to the Reichstag, which provided their main tribune for agitation and for spreading socialist ideas. German social democracy defied the measures, not least due to the extremely organised 'red postal service', which would smuggle the weekly newspaper, printed in Switzerland, to all subscribers. The law fell with Bismarck himself.

18 Friedrich Albert Lange (1828–75) was a neo-Kantian philosopher, economist, politician and socialist who was also a member of the First International.

19 Thomas Robert Malthus (1766–1834) was an English cleric and writer who argued that the danger of rapid population growth ensured that over time famine or disease would naturally ensue, returning the population to a more sustainable number.

isms all exhibit a tendency to proliferate beyond their scope of sustenance [*Nahrungsspielraum*]. To be sure, I rejected the doctrine that the poverty which exists in society stems from overpopulation. In this regard I fully accepted the socialists' critique of society. But I parted from my comrades in that I had to concede that there would be a danger to socialism when it eliminated the poverty of the lower classes: the general prosperity would necessarily lead to overpopulation and thus, following a temporary improvement, to new poverty. The socialists' objections to Malthus, which assumed a mystical adaptation of human fertility to a respective expansion in their scope of sustenance, struck me as invalid. I only found refuge in neo-Malthusianism, which in the mid-1870s was quickly gaining in significance.

I thus entered into socialist literature with a book which was opposed to the prevalent socialist point of view. At that point I was still cool towards Marx and my economic views were of a highly eclectic nature.

The title of the book was *The Effect of Population Increases on the Progress of Society*.[20] It was already finished in the spring of 1878 and a socialist publisher, Bracker, had agreed to publish it in the autumn. Yet immediately after this the ominous shots of Hödel and Nobiling sounded,[21] the Anti-Socialist Law was introduced and for a long time it was impossible to conceive of socialist publications in Germany. I was glad that with the help of friends I was able to convince a Viennese publisher to bring out the book in the autumn of 1879. To save on printing costs I omitted two historical excursions, one on Ireland and one on India, which I had initially wanted to publish in the form of an appendix. There was a predilection to present these two countries as proof of the idea that poverty results from the population increasing too rapidly. From their history and social living conditions I now attempted to prove that the poverty in these areas was independent of increases in their respective populations.

Soon after, I published the excursion on Ireland as a pamphlet.[22] As Engels would put it, I left the far more extensive one on India, which had cost me a lot of sweat, to 'the gnawing criticism of the mice',[23] because when I was finally in a

20 Kautsky 1880.

21 Emil Heinrich Max Hödel (1857–78) and Karl Eduard Nobiling (1848–78) attempted to assassinate Kaiser Wilhelm I within a month of each other. Nobiling took his life immediately after realising that the plot had failed and Hödel received the death penalty. The furore caused by such assassination attempts, which were becoming quite commonplace in 1880s Europe, provided a pretext for the legal crackdown on the socialist movement.

22 Kautsky 1880a.

23 The quote originally comes from Marx in his 'Preface' to *The Critique of Political Economy* (Marx 1975–2004d, p. 264). Engels also refers to these comments in 1888, which is probably Kautsky's source. Cf. Engels 1975–2004, p. 353.

position to publish it, my conception of history was no longer what it had been when I wrote it. I had arrived at Marxism.

III

During this period I was not only motivated by scientific questions and party politics. I played an active role in the party in the form of contributions to the Viennese party press and the *Volksstaat*[24] in Leipzig, which in 1875 was renamed *Vorwärts*. Through this activity I came to correspond with Wilhelm Liebknecht. In 1876, I met him and [August] Bebel on a trip to Leipzig.

Alongside this activity there was also a personal matter which had occupied me ever since I had been at university: how should I earn a living? The more my own fate merged with that of the party, the more forlorn were my prospects of an academic career. As an active social democrat it was impossible to become a professor or even a teacher in a secondary school. Back then, however, the prospects of earning a living from party work were just as poor. The party press was meagre, its number of editors small and their pay reminiscent of the wages received by the weavers. Contributors to the press were unpaid.

I thus looked around for a profession which could make me economically independent and yet allow me to continue my intellectual and political work, something I had already realised was going to be my life work.

At first, I considered becoming a lawyer. I switched as early as the second semester and enrolled in the law faculty. Yet I soon realised that I was unfit to be a lawyer. My thought always assumes historical forms. When it comes to ascertaining the interconnections of something, I am above all occupied with the question of how it came into being. Finding my way in mathematical or legal thought always costs me much effort. I would have hardly achieved anything as a lawyer. So in the third semester I switched back to philosophy. But at the same time, I had surrendered to magic, namely the magic of art.

My father was a painter, as was my grandfather. From my childhood on, I was familiar with pictorial production and artistic views and I had amateurishly drawn, extensively, as far back as secondary school – it was only natural that I would seek to make a living as a painter. However, an eye complaint forced me to give up this career after a few months. As painful as the disappointment was

24 The main publication of the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (the so-called Eisenachers) between October 1869 and September 1876. It was edited by Wilhelm Liebknecht. Marx and Engels both contributed to it.

to me, it was probably a blessing. My teachers assured me that I did have talent. But it is impossible to become a major artist without devoting one's whole being to it. Art does not tolerate intense devotion to science and politics simultaneously, unless you are a real great, a Michelangelo or a Leonardo da Vinci. I would have probably been a mediocre painter and would have thus lost the ability to focus on those areas outside of art which I certainly would have had to neglect the most. I would have therefore only been able to achieve mediocre things in both fields.

Initially, I tried my luck at another art form. My family was even more closely associated with the theatre than with painting. My father and grandfather were theatre painters. My mother was an actress and she wrote novels after illness had forced her to step down from the stage. Already as a student in secondary school, I had written plays and novels. In 1875 I even tried to publish a novel which dealt with social affairs. The Hamburg party newspaper[25] to which I submitted the novel turned it down because the editor did not want to spend the rest of his life in jail for publishing it. It violated too many laws. Soon after, I forwent publishing it for another reason: it struck me as youthful folly.

But might I not have had more luck with a play if it did not breathe the defiance of a protesting rebel but instead was as harmless as something like Schweitzer's pranks, which in the 1870s captivated the world?[26] In 1878, I managed to get a play onto the stage in Vienna – it was not even a flop.

But the performance made it clear to me that I lacked the necessary dramatic vein. Although some friends persuaded me to make further attempts, I came to the conclusion that this career did not hold any prospects either.

In 1879, I was most disappointed and unsatisfied. All my attempts to create a sphere of activity independent of the state and the party had failed. The book I had completed in 1878 lay unpublished in the drawers of my desk, and the party in which I had placed such hopes appeared to have collapsed under the blows of the Emergency Law.

In such a situation, I initially thought that I could do no worse than to complete my studies, which until then I had only gone about in a casual manner alongside many other things which seemed far more important. I now wanted

25 The title of the play was *Atlantic Pacific Company*. It was performed on several occasions but never published. Werner Blumenberg argues that Kautsky's memory failed him when recalling the play's fate: he did not lose interest in it after it was rejected but actually sought the help of Wilhelm Liebknecht, who was to arrange for its publication (Blumenberg 1960, pp. 11–12).

26 Jean Baptista von Schweitzer (1833–75) was Lassalle's successor as leader of the German ADAV. Kautsky is probably referring to his novel, *Lucinde oder Capital und Arbeit* (*Lucinde or Capital and Labour*; von Schweitzer 1863–4).

to focus on these studies with the greatest enthusiasm and began thinking about a doctoral thesis. My book would not have been suitable for this, although later, after it was published, it won the praise of Adolf Wagner. However, back then the *cand. rer. pol.* had not yet been invented. I had to produce a historical thesis and chose as my topic [Thomas] Jefferson's involvement in the French Revolution. I had studied the French Revolution with particular zeal, and my attention had been drawn to the relations between French and American democrats by the work in the Historical Seminar of Professor Büdinger, under whose supervision I intended to do my doctorate.

I initially threw myself into studying American history and its specific character. I was just beginning to feel firm ground under my feet when there was a new turning point in my life.

A young man of letters from Frankfurt with significant funds, Karl Höchberg,[27] had joined German social democracy shortly before the Anti-Socialist Law and actively assisted it during this time of emergency. He supported it financially and published several newspapers aimed at spreading socialist propaganda. In Leipzig, he published the *State Economic Treatises* under the name of Dr. Karl Seyfferth. It did not openly champion socialism, but treated economic issues from the perspective of a 'state-run economy'. In Zurich he sponsored the appearance of the political weekly, *Social Democrat*,[28] and under the name of Dr. Ludwig Richter published the *Almanac for Social Science and Social Policy*.

Liebknecht made me aware of Höchberg, and in the course of 1879 I wrote a few contributions for the latter's publications. He was interested in me and offered me the opportunity to publish my book. Eventually, after it had been published, he made me an offer to come to Zurich and enter into his service as a permanent contributor to his publications. I gladly took him up on the offer. I had finally found what I had been looking for. There was no longer any insecure groping around and wandering in various directions in search of a career. From then on, I lived exclusively for economic and historical research and for applying the results of this research to politics. This work, which until then I had performed for free, now also brought me the means to exist, although at times I lived quite hand-to-mouth.

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27 Karl Höchberg (1853–85). For a discussion of his various publications and Marx and Engels's suspicion towards him, see Gilcher-Holtey 1986, pp. 20–35.

28 *The Social Democrat* was published between 1879 and 1890 as an illegal weekly newspaper which was extremely influential across the whole of Europe. It was produced first in Zurich and then in London. Bernstein edited it from 1881–90. Its entire archive has been reproduced in Bartel, Schörder, Seeber and Wolter (eds.) 1970.

IV

I moved to Zurich in January 1880. It was as though I had arrived in a new world when I came out of the village-like confinement of Viennese party life and was placed in the environment of German social democracy. Back then, the German party was already significant, even if initially only through its central phalanx, the emigrants in Zurich. At a single blow, my horizons had been expanded enormously, and at the same time I acquired what until then I had been lacking in terms of theory, namely teachers and guides.

Nevertheless, Karl Höchberg was my own age and unable to be either. His intellectual interests were primarily of a philosophical nature. He was especially interested in ethics and the history of music. He was not interested in the theoretical aspect of economics, only the practical. His socialism was completely un-Marxist and I found it to be unsatisfactory, because for all my concerns I had gradually become more and more infected by Marxism. The more my general knowledge of economics grew, the more I learned to treasure Marx's *Capital*. And my conception of history had begun to be reorganised ever since I familiarised myself with Engels's *Anti-Dühring*, something that by no means happened immediately after its publication. Engels initially published his critique of Dühring in *Vowärts* in Leipizig in a series of instalments which were spread so far apart that the series lasted from January 1877 through to July 1878. Publishing in this way meant that any impact was lost. The book was published in the beginnings of the Anti-Socialist Law, when we were concerned with things other than theory. Nonetheless, the document preoccupied me because in my economic and historical thought I strove to overcome my previous eclecticism and to achieve uniformity.

I found a powerful guide for this purpose in the form of Eduard Bernstein,[29] Höchberg's secretary. Five years older than me, he had grown up in Berlin, stimulated by the most active socialist life that the world knew of at the time. He was far superior to me and provided me with abundant information and encouragement. He had overcome his temporary inclinations towards Dühringism and placed himself on the ground of Marxism with both feet.

We eagerly studied Marxist literature together and in the process became so much of a heart and soul that we were regarded as a kind of red version of

29 The surviving correspondence between Bernstein and Kautsky has been published in its entirety across four chronologically-ordered volumes: cf. Schelz-Brandenburg (ed.) 2011, Schelz-Brandenburg (ed.) 2003 (two volumes) and Eva Bettina Görtz (ed.) 2011.

Orestes and Pylades.[30] Our studies were greatly supported by getting to know the two old masters in London, who Bebel has recalled in his memoirs.[31]

Since Marx and Engels were highly suspicious of Höchberg and his literary ventures, Bebel and Bernstein were sent to London in the autumn of 1881 in order to bring about a *modus vivendi*. In March 1881, I was sent over to continue the good relations which had been established. I stayed in London until June. I only seldom visited Marx. His wife was already seriously ill, and already recognised her fatal end to be unavoidable, so I was hesitant to disturb the quiet of the house with frequent visits. I got together with Engels all the more as a result. Our acquaintance became friendship and led to an intimate communication which was partly oral and partly written. It lasted until the death of my great friend, to whom I am infinitely indebted.

If being called to Zurich in 1880 had prescribed my life as a social-democratic party writer, then this period also gave my scientific work the definitive stamp of a consistent Marxism freed from all eclectic attachments. Both my economic and historical works were henceforth written strictly according to the Marxist method.

My work for Höchberg's ventures did not last long. In the spring of 1882 a financial disaster forced him to restrict his outgoings substantially. His ventures came to an end. The exception was the *Social Democrat* in Zurich, which was able to survive without subsidies. I was dismissed and then returned to Vienna. No longer was I the inconclusive searcher from before. I now knew what I wanted. I had learned much and was now determined to establish my own publication.

Yet this did not happen that quickly, so in the meantime Heinrich Braun,[32] who I had come to know along with H.E. Sax and Victor Adler[33] in Vienna, advised me to use the free time to finish my doctorate. I did not attach any great importance to this, especially since Engels had explained to me that, if I did not aspire to an academic career, then the work preparing the defence of

30 In Greek mythology Orestes (the son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon) and Pylades (the son of King Strophius of Phocis and of Anaxibia) were close cousins whose intimate relationship is often portrayed as romantic or homoerotic.

31 Bebel 2013 [1914], pp. 136–43.

32 Heinrich Braun (1854–1927) edited a range of socialist publications and, following the German Revolution, became Prussian Minister for Agriculture. He studied at the University of Vienna, where he could have met Kautsky.

33 Victor Adler (1852–1918) was one of the most important figures in the early days of the workers' movement in Austria, working alongside Kautsky to write Austrian social democracy's Hainfeld Programme of 1889.

my thesis would be a waste of time. Braun, however, claimed that the matter did not need to take up much time. I had just completed a study that could be used as a doctoral dissertation.

I had still not yet entirely abandoned my idea of a universal history. The preliminary work had shown me that I could not get by without knowledge of prehistory. I thus started studying it. Chance supported me in this. Höchberg had inclinations towards ethnology as well, if only because of his studies of ethics. His library contained a number of important works on history and ethnology.

When I went to London in 1881, I found Marx and Engels engaged in studies of prehistory, the fruits of which came in the form of the little book on the origin of the family, which was based on Marx's notes and published by Engels in 1884.[34] During my stay in London, it was none other than Bancroft's work on the Indians of western North America which Marx was studying (*Native Races of the Pacific States*, 1875),[35] whereas Engels drew my attention to Bachofen's mother right.[36] Strangely, neither of them mentioned Morgan's work *Ancient Society*,[37] which appeared in 1877 and which I was unable to find listed elsewhere either. At that point I was only familiar with his great work *Systems of Consanguinity* (1871).

The result of my work was a treatise on the origin of marriage and the family, which I completed in 1881/1882 in Vienna. In places, this work arrived at different findings than Engels did later on, but I may note with satisfaction that later research vindicated me on the matters where Engels took a different view. Thus, I already rejected Morgan's adoption of the Punalua marriage as far back as 1882 and I think that I am the first to have understood the kinship terms on which Morgan based himself as designations of generation levels, not degrees of descent. Of course, I freely admit that some of what I assumed 40 years ago has become outdated by recent research.

This work was to become my doctoral dissertation. Braun advised me to submit it as an anthropological study to Haeckel[38] and to graduate in Jena. At first

34 Engels 1941 [1884].

35 Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832–1918) was an American historian and ethnologist.

36 Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815–87) was a Swiss anthropologist associated with the theory of matriarchy or *Mutterrecht*, which postulates that motherhood is the source of human society. This idea had a powerful influence on Marx and Engels as well as on later Marxist thinkers.

37 Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–81) was an anthropologist and Republican politician whose ethnography of the Iroquois in particular was groundbreaking. Marx and Engels read his work avidly.

38 Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) was a highly influential zoologist who helped spread the ideas

everything went as desired, too. Haeckel accepted the dissertation and agreed to be my examiner.

I immediately headed for Jena to get in touch with him. But I arrived too late. The summer holidays had started and Haeckel had left Jena. Instead the dean of the Faculty of Philosophy (I forget his name) summoned me in order to inform me that it was unacceptable for Haeckel to be my examiner. The work was a philological, not a scientific one, and my doctorate had to be in philology, he said. I replied that I could not do so, because I had not studied philology since secondary school. And even though I occasionally quoted Herodotus, Tacitus and other ancient authors, my work was of a purely ethnological nature and could only be assessed by a sociologist or an anthropologist. At any rate, of all the professors in Jena it was Haeckel who was closest to the subject of the dissertation. The dean remained unconvinced and we parted on bad terms.

It struck me as hopeless to try and complete my doctorate in Jena under these circumstances. I forewent the doctorate definitely – all the more so because in the meantime the negotiations on the foundation of my journal had ended favourably. Engels, Liebknecht and Bebel became interested in it and in Dietz[39] we found a splendid publisher. For the rest of 1882, the preparation of my journal sufficiently occupied me to prevent any further plans for a doctorate. In the same year I published the unlucky doctoral dissertation as a series of articles in the Stuttgart-based *Cosmos*.[40] It has since ceased publication, but back then *Cosmos* was a highly distinguished Darwinian monthly.

V

The first issue of *Die Neue Zeit*, a journal I edited until the autumn of 1917, appeared just before Marx's death in January 1883. I placed my monthly pub-

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of Darwinism in the German-speaking world. He established an atheist monism with many supporters and was amongst the first to argue that the principle of progress could be applied to historical analysis and socio-political developments, adding a distinctively aristocratic twist to the theory of evolution and the survival of the fittest.

39 Johann Heinrich Wilhem Dietz (1843–1922) was a pivotal figure in early social democracy, editing the Hamburg party paper, *Hamburger Altonaer Volksblatt*, from 1875. He was also a member of social democracy's parliamentary fraction in the Reichstag during the Anti-Socialist Law. He founded the Dietz Verlag as a private enterprise in 1881. In 1901 it became the official property of the SPD and thereby the party publisher.

40 This is actually a small typographical error on Kautsky's part – the journal was *Kosmos* not *Cosmos* (Kautsky 1882). According to Blumenberg (Blumenberg 1960, p. 30), there exist Russian, Bulgarian and Latvian translations of the text, but it is still unavailable in English.

lication in Stuttgart at the service of Marxism, just as Bernstein was doing at same time with the *Social Democrat* in Zurich. The two journals differed in that Bernstein's was more political and more ruthless in tone, since it was published outside of the remit of the Anti-Socialist Law, whereas mine had to be more cautious and adopted more of a theoretical character. But in general both were in complete agreement. Following the publications edited by Marx and Engels before and immediately after the 1848 revolution, ours were the first to serve consciously and systematically the propagation and further development of Marxist thought and research.[41] Only with these publications is it possible to speak of a Marxist school.

Of course, I tried to emphasise the specific character of Marx's conception of economics, history and socialism in the face of the socialist eclecticism I encountered. In so doing I soon became involved in polemics with several of my comrades. The first of these was in 1884, when I pointed out the differences that separated Marx from Rodbertus.[42] As a result, I came into conflict with C.A. Schramm,[43] who back then was viewed as German social democracy's most respected economic theorist after Marx and Engels. The number of polemics in which I have become involved for the sake of Marxism since then is legion.

In addition, I set out to work systematically according to the method I had now acquired in economics and the research of history, or rather, according to Marx's method, increasingly to carry out both together – to look at the economy historically, and at history in terms of economics. A fruitful incentive for this activity came when I was able to move to London in 1885, as soon as the editorial work on my monthly was in progress. In constant interaction with Engels and amongst the treasures of the British Museum, working became a pleasure.

I had realised that Marxism represented a unification of the two currents of socialism which had been separated until the emergence of Marxist social-

41 Kautsky perhaps overstates things here in that many of the theoretical journals Marx was involved with were rather short-lived and unsuccessful. The exception, his *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, was not a theoretical journal.

42 The work Kautsky refers to is Kautsky, Karl 1884.

43 Carl August Schramm (1830–1905) was one of the first social-democratic opponents of Kautsky's efforts to popularise Marxism through the medium of *Die Neue Zeit*, defending Lassalle against 'the Marx cult' and 'the dogma of the Marxist school'. In a letter to Eduard Bernstein in November 1884, he wrote: 'The entire movement brought into being by Lassalle happened without Marx's involvement, but now we are making Marx into a prophet. You and Kautsky even portray his conception of history as a principle of German social democracy!' (Quoted in Gilcher-Holtey 1986, p. 38). The work Kautsky is referring to is Kautsky 1884a.

ism. On the one hand, there was the elemental [*urwüchsig*] rebellion of the proletarians against the conditions oppressing them, which in many cases boiled down to a primitive communism of equality. On the other there was the rich economic critique of bourgeois society on the part of the scientifically educated friends of humanity amongst the upper classes, a critique which, wherever it had positive things to say, boiled down to a utopian socialism.[44]

I was stirred to point out the disparity between these two sources of modern socialism in their origins by looking at the characters of two of their most significant representatives, Thomas More[45] and Thomas Münzer. My portrayal of the former's life appeared in 1888. I was not able to follow it up immediately with one of Münzer. For my studies soon showed me that the specific character of the movement he represented could not be detected with sufficient clarity from his story alone. I had to continue the study through from Münzer to the Anabaptists – and back beyond Münzer to a number of communist sects before him.

I had not quite completed the work when the centenary of the outbreak of the French Revolution gave me occasion to examine this event in a Marxist manner; that is to say, to investigate the class antagonisms which came to light within it and to show that a class is by no means the uniform structure it often appears in theory. Each of the classes of 1789 broke down into a number of subdivisions, each of which had its own specific interests which on occasion were in significant opposition to the overall interests of the class as a whole. The revolution cannot be understood without taking these subdivisions into account. The work appeared in 1889 under the title *The Class Antagonisms of 1789* and in later editions as *Class Antagonisms in the Age of the French Revolution*.[46]

In the same year, 1889, the Second International was founded and the May Day celebrations were agreed upon. In order to propagate both I published a booklet in 1890 entitled *Worker Protection, especially Worker Protection Laws Internationally and the Eight-Hour Day*.[47] It was the last book I published under the Anti-Socialist Law, which fell in October 1890. Unfortunately, I had to leave London.

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44 This passage provides a pithy summation of what Lars T. Lih calls 'the merger formula' or 'the merger of socialism and the worker movement' common to both Kautsky and Lenin (Lih 2008, pp. 41–61).

45 Kautsky 1927 [1888].

46 The first edition is Kautsky 1889. The second edition is Kautsky 1908. For an interesting essay on Kautsky's contribution to the study of the French Revolution, see Nygaard 2009.

47 Kautsky 1890.

Dietz argued that it was now time to transform *Die Neue Zeit* into a weekly. This was not desirable to me, because I feared that it might become more political and less scientific. But Dietz viewed this transformation as the best way of expanding the number of our readers and thus our potential impact, and I could not ignore this argument. Yet if the publication was to become more current and lively, then it was necessary for me to edit it from Germany. I therefore went to Stuttgart. The London-based *Social Democrat* ceased publication and Bernstein became a permanent correspondent for *Die Neue Zeit* from London.

The party had been reorganised following the Anti-Socialist Law and also had to give itself a new programme. The party leadership presented the draft of such a programme to the Erfurt Congress of 1891. I had drawn up the theoretical section of another draft, the practical section of which came from Bernstein. Engels and Bebel preferred my proposal.[48] The programme commission for the Erfurt congress agreed with them. With a few additions, which were mainly taken from the party leadership's proposal, the party congress raised my draft to the status of party programme. I was commissioned to write a commentary on it. This appeared in 1892 under the title *The Erfurt Programme*.[49]

During the Anti-Socialist Law, relations between German and Swiss social democracy had become particularly close. This probably explains why, following the fall of the Anti-Socialist law, the slogan of replacing parliamentary democracy with direct legislation became popular, a slogan rooted in the specific character of Switzerland. I stood against endeavours to make this slogan a general one in my 1893 book, *Parliamentarism, Popular Legislation and Social Democracy* (in later editions it was published under the shorter title of *Parliamentarism and Democracy*),[50] in which I set out why parliamentarism is indispensable to the modern state.

Between these works, I had finished my studies on Thomas Münzer, his predecessors and his successors. I published the results in 1894[51] in the book *Forerunners of Modern Socialism*. Generally speaking, for me the first decade of *Die Neue Zeit* was one of peaceful work, despite all of the polemics the publication brought with it. These had only been of an occasional nature and were considered to be merely individual differences of opinion. As much as tactical

48 See the Appendix of this volume for a chronological collection of the various drafts of the Erfurt programme.

49 Kautsky 1892. An abridged translation is available in Kautsky 1971 [1892].

50 Kautsky 1893a (see Part One of this volume).

51 This appears to be an error on Kautsky's part. The work was published in 1895. The work has not been translated in its entirety, but Kautsky 1897 [1895] covers communism during the Reformation.

problems occupied us, the age of the Anti-Socialist Law gave rise to an intense interest in theoretical discussion.

This changed when, following the collapse of these laws, there was greater freedom of expression in Germany and the rapid growth of the party brought with it a series of new elements into our ranks, considerably increasing the diversity of views. Pronounced differences soon appeared. These differences engulfed wide party circles and were not merely of a tactical nature but also matters of principle. As Engels had died in 1895 and Bernstein opposed me soon afterwards, I considered myself to have been abandoned by those who until then had been my role models and strongest supporters. In the revisionist crisis, the main job of fending off the revisionist critique fell to me.

VI

The revisionist movement was ushered in by a discussion of the agrarian question. Following the fall of the Anti-Socialist Law, the rapid expansion of the party in the cities contrasted with its slow growth in the countryside, something which appeared all the more strange in that the competition of agricultural products from abroad and the fall in their prices had in some areas brought about great distress to agriculture. What should be our party's stance on this? This became a pressing matter. At that point, the vast majority of social democracy was still of the opinion that the triumphant advance of large enterprise was unstoppable both in industry and agriculture. Yet the conclusions drawn from this were by no means the same throughout the party.

At the Frankfurt Congress of 1894, Vollmar[52] and Schönlank[53] jointly moved a resolution demanding not only worker protection but also peasant protection. I, among others, opposed this resolution. I argued that we of course needed to stand up for the peasants as citizens, but we must not artificially support small enterprise.

52 Georg von Vollmar (1850–1922) was a Bavarian social democrat and Reichstag deputy. His 1891 'Eldorado' speeches in the Munich public house of the same name are considered to foreshadow later revisionist trends in the party which, like Vollmar, favoured seeking alliances and cooperation with bourgeois parties by downplaying what he viewed as the SPD's 'radical utopianism'. Previously he had been a 'leftist' and general strike-ist.

53 Bruno Schönlank (1859–1901) was a social-democratic publicist who served 18 months in prison for publishing revolutionary literature during the Anti-Socialist Law. He was a contributor to *Die Neue Zeit* and from 1894 until his death was the editor of the influential *Leipziger Volkszeitung*.

In addition, there was a third tendency, primarily represented by David,[54] which saw in the peasant family economy the highest form of agriculture and which aimed at breaking up and parcelling large enterprises.

At the Breslau Congress of 1895, the majority was on my side. Yet this was not the end of the matter for me. The problem of agricultural development occupied me most intensely and did not let go of me for a long time. I eventually came to the conclusion that David was right on one point: agricultural development is not proceeding in the direction of large enterprises forcing back small ones. This occurs only under certain circumstances. In other circumstances, we see the opposite process. Yet I did not go so far as David in seeing the peasant family economy as the agricultural ideal. In general, the relationship between large and small enterprises in agriculture changes only slightly. All the while I was convinced, and I remain so to this day, that with the same amount of labour, large enterprise, rationally carried out with scientific methods and furnished with the latest equipment, delivers greater returns than small enterprises, at least in the branches of production which serve mass production, especially in the production of grain. For me the drawback of large enterprise was to be found in the wages system.

I remained of the opinion that cooperative large enterprises will provide the best results and considered it the duty of a socialist regime to promote such enterprises. For the present, however, I was definitely convinced that the destruction of the large enterprises, their breaking up into dwarf enterprises conducted without wage labour and merely with the labour power available in the family, would signify a serious impairment to agricultural production and a critical paralysis of its technological progress. This is the conclusion I arrived at in the most comprehensive economic work I had written at that point, *The Agrarian Question*,[55] which was published in 1899. The second edition (1902) is long out of print. I have still not arranged for a new edition – not because I have changed my views but because a series of preconditions from which I proceeded back then no longer exist or have even transformed into their opposite. I wrote during a period of declining food prices and land rents. But this trend came to a halt soon after my book was published and the opposite trend of rising prices and ground rents began to set in. The plight of the mass of the peasants thereby increasingly came to an end. But with this the antagonism

54 Eduard David (1863–1930) was a member of the right wing of social democracy from around this time onwards, and later became an outspoken revisionist supporter of Bernstein.

55 Kautsky 1988 [1899].

between them and the urban classes intensified, the industrial workers above all.

In light of this new situation, a new edition would in some respects have meant a complete rewrite. At first, I could not find the time to do this, and the longer I waited, the more new facts and experiences accumulated that would have to be taken into consideration. It strikes me as doubtful whether I will ever get around to modernising my *Agrarian Question*. As a provisional replacement, I published a booklet on the socialisation of agriculture in 1921.[56]

VII

When my book on the agrarian question appeared, the discussion on revisionism was already in full swing. And I had to rush immediately headlong into it. I did so without any real joy.[57] For in contrast to the debate on agriculture it did not offer me any new theoretical ideas or insights. I simply had to defend that which had been my conviction for quite some time and which a renewed, critical review could not undermine, but only reinforce. It is possible to distinguish between two aspects of the revisionist movement: a tactical and a theoretical one.

The tactics and the corresponding propaganda of the social democratic parties in the major states of the European continent were attuned to the struggle against the military monarchy. They were based on memories from the time of the French Revolution and the upheavals of 1848. Our thought, our propaganda and our tactics were completely dominated by the idea of a political revolution as the essential precondition of the advance of socialism.

Since the amnesty for the refugees of the Paris Commune in 1880, and since the fall of the Anti-Socialist Law in Germany in 1890, however, democratic conditions were present for propaganda and organisation, if not yet for winning power non-violently. This change could not but have an impact on our language and tactics. This was recognised in many party circles. Engels himself highlighted it in his last publication, the famous 'Introduction' to a reprint of Marx's *Class Struggles in France*.[58]

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56 Kautsky 1919 (cited in Blumenberg 1960, p. 104).

57 For an authoritative collection of various materials from the revisionist controversy, see Tudor and Tudor 1988. For the genesis of the revisionist dispute through the prism of Kautsky and Bernstein's correspondence, see Schelz-Brandenburg 1992 and Schelz-Brandenburg (ed.) 2003.

58 Engels 1975–2004a, pp. 506–25.

Even before this, I had also come to the conclusion that democracy would entail some changes to the forms of our activity, and openly explained this in an article for *Die Neue Zeit*. When, from autumn 1896 on, Bernstein began to subject several of our previous views to a critique in a series of articles under the general title of 'Problems of Socialism', I was at first extremely sympathetic. I saw his series as a continuation of what Engels and I had begun. But the more these articles went on in 1897 and 1898, the more worrying they appeared to me. I still hoped that these worries would be dispelled when Bernstein systematically summarised and explained his views in book form.[59] The opposite was the case. A passionate rejection of his views emerged from my initial worries.

To be sure, I had also been critical of some of the details of our tactics and propaganda and I too had found that, at least in terms of agriculture, the Marxist prognosis did not quite apply. Yet the longer I studied things, the stronger became my conviction that errors could be shown to exist in Marxist teaching only in individual results. The edifice as a whole, however, struck me as unshakeable. My work had increasingly tested the fruitfulness of the Marxist method and its points of departure – the theory of value and the materialist conception of history; I firmly rejected any eclecticism and learnt to reject any compromise – not when it came to practical politics, but certainly in theoretical work.

And then came Bernstein with a critique which did not reject Marxism in order to replace it with another, higher point of view – if he had succeeded in that, then I would admiringly have acknowledged such work. But for me his critique boiled down to declaring the foundations of Marxism to be inadequate and incorporating elements into it which struck me as incompatible with it. I vehemently opposed this revision of Marxism, which I regarded as theoretically compromised, as a relapse into the eclecticism which had fortunately been overcome. I did this all the more ardently as it was Bernstein who started this 'revision' – somebody who alongside Engels had contributed most to displacing my eclectic views with uniform, scientific ones and on whose help in championing and further developing these views I had counted more than ever since Engels's death.

Besides numerous polemical articles, I opposed Bernstein in the book *Bernstein and the Social-Democratic Programme* (1899),[60] a rejoinder to his *The Pre-*

59 Available in English in Bernstein 1993 [1899].

60 Kautsky, Karl 1899. As of yet there is no English translation of this polemical intervention, but passages from it have been made available in English in Goode (ed.) 1983, pp. 15–32.

conditions of Socialism. He recently published a new edition of it. My book is long out of print, but I have foregone reprinting it. Not because I would recognise that what I said there was wrong, but because since then I have had sufficient opportunity to develop my point of view positively and the book's polemical discussion would only tear open old wounds.

It is of course not up to me to decide who was right. Our tactical differences from that time were rendered obsolete after the revolution. It created an entirely new situation which gave the tactical problems a completely new complexion. Yet one can say this much about our theoretical differences: the decomposition of Marxism which was expected from them failed to materialise. On the contrary, Marx has gained tremendous significance not only in politics, but in scientific thought. Marx is already being treated like Kant: the most contradictory tendencies invoke him in order to claim the authority of his name for themselves. Only too often do those like us arrive at a situation where we can repeat the words Marx once expressed towards a disciple who was not as insightful as he was keen: 'If that is Marxism, then I'm not a Marxist'.

The later critics of Marx love to reproduce this quote in a way that has Marx say: 'I am not a Marxist', from which they conclude that anybody who wishes to work in the spirit of Marxism has to begin by ceasing to be a Marxist. So conceived, of course, the quote is completely meaningless – as meaningless as it would be if Kant had said that he was not a Kantian or Darwin that he was not a Darwinian.

VIII

As much I was occupied with revisionism, I did not become completely absorbed by it – even in the period of the most heated polemics. In 1897, I examined the importance of the consumer cooperatives,[61] opposing both their exuberant overestimation and their underestimation, something that had been quite strong in German social democracy since Lassalle. The result was the pamphlet *Consumer Cooperatives and the Workers' Movement*. The propagation of protectionism in our ranks, mainly by Max Schippel,[62] prompted me in 1901

61 Kautsky 1897.

62 Max Schippel (1859–1928) was a revisionist member of the SPD parliamentary fraction. This was not the only polemic Kautsky conducted against Schippel. The two also clashed over the question of a popular militia, which was one of the Erfurt programme's minimum demands. In 1904, Kautsky also wrote an essay for *Die Neue Zeit*, entitled 'Wahlkreis und

to write a work on *Trade Policy and Social Democracy*,[63] followed in 1907 by *Social Democracy and Colonial Policy*.[64]

Also published in connection with the revisionist movement, and also like the latter writings written in a non-polemical form, was the little book on *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*[65] from 1906, which opposed attempts to incorporate Kantian ethics into Marxism. Yet already before that my attention had above all been focused on a great event, the Russian Revolution. While for the most part the revisionists expected an imperceptible growth into socialism, I was increasingly filled with the conviction that revolution in Russia was at the door, and that this would also entail a political revolution in Austria and Germany.

In anticipation of this event, in 1902 I published *The Social Revolution*,[66] the 'travel guide for the state of the future', as Prince Bülow once called it in the Reichstag. In the winter of 1903/4, I explained in a series of articles[67] in *Die Neue Zeit* that we had to expect the outbreak of the revolution in Russia imminently. This revolution would be carried out by the proletariat but, given the immaturity of economic relations, would not yet be able to establish socialist production. It did not take long before the Russian Revolution really arrived.

I had correctly predicted it, but when it arrived I was actually wrong on one point: I overestimated its intensity and duration and thus the repercussions it could have for the West. It failed sooner than we had expected, so that its effects on Austria and Germany were less revolutionary than we had hoped. It nonetheless brought universal, equal suffrage to Austria and increased the vehemence of the struggle for suffrage in Prussia. Along with the arms race, the Russian Revolution created a stage of uncertainty in Europe which promised to bring about the most unexpected catastrophes. I explained this in the 1909 book *The Road to Power*.[68]

Partei' ('Electoral Constituency and Party'), in connection with the debate over whether Schippel could be removed from his Reichstag seat by the party against the opposition of his constituency. For my translation of this piece, cf. Kautsky 2015 [1904].

63 Kautsky 1901; cf. Blumenberg 1960, pp. 61–2.

64 Known in English as *Socialism and Colonial Policy* (Kautsky 1975).

65 Kautsky 1907 [1906].

66 Kautsky 1903 [1902].

67 One of these articles, a self-defence of his *The Social Revolution* entitled 'Revolutionary Questions', is translated in Day and Gaido (eds.) 2011, pp. 187–251.

68 Kautsky 1909. The Menshevik historian and archivist Boris Nicolaevsky notes that, owing to the stringent democratic restrictions of the Stolypin period and World War I, it was

At this time, the struggle against revisionism had completely subsided. But now I was involved in a struggle with the opposite camp. I had indeed expected the revolution, but according to my Marxist persuasion it was an elemental event, the arrival of which could not be sped up any more than it could be put off. When I pointed to its arrival, I did so in order to deduce from it the necessity of organising and training the ranks of the proletariat so that it could prove up to the difficult tasks which awaited it. Yet in its passionate struggles the Russian Revolution had unleashed an impatience, an outlook for which my standpoint was condemning the movement to a waiting devoid of action. The new weapon of the mass strike, which in 1905 in Russia had achieved such great effects, appeared to them to be the sovereign means of forcing the revolution. This group, mainly represented by Rosa Luxemburg and her friends Karl Liebknecht, Georg Ledebour[69] and Paul Lensch,[70] turned against Bebel and me. Because of this, I fought sharp polemics with Luxemburg and Lensch. These polemics prompted me to write *The Political Mass Strike*,[71] published in spring 1914, in which I examined the conditions for the mass strike as well as its significance and limits.

In addition to these political, topical works, the decade of passionate political animation before the war also brought some purely theoretical tasks my way. Following Engels's death, Marx's daughter Eleanor had intended to publish her father's estate with my help. When she herself died prematurely, Laura, his last living daughter at the time, requested that I take over this job. I advised her to hand over to Mehring[72] the parts of the estate which fell more into the field

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impossible to publish a Russian translation of the book until 1917 (Kautsky (ed.) 1954, p. 96).

69 Georg Ledebour (1850–1947) was an SPD Reichstag deputy. He was a pre-war radical, a centrist during the war, and hostile to the Bolsheviks and the Spartacists. He was a member of the USPD in 1917 and its Berlin organisation in 1918, leading the circle of revolutionary shop stewards. He was the co-chair of the revolutionary committee in January 1919 and charged with high treason. He broke with the USPD left at the Halle Congress in 1920 on the question of joining the Comintern.

70 Paul Lensch (1873–1926) was an SPD journalist and Reichstag deputy. One of the 'lefts' in the pre-war SPD, at the meeting of the parliamentary fraction on 3 August he was opposed to approving war credits, but soon broke with his former leftism and became an outspoken advocate of a German victory in the war alongside others in what became known as *Die Glocke* group after its publication of the same name. See Lewis 2014 for a discussion of the formation of this group.

71 Kautsky 1914.

72 Franz Mehring (1846–1919) wrote a four-volume history of German social democracy (Mehring 1960 [1896–7]) and thus would have found this material interesting. He originally wrote such a history in 1877 for his doctoral dissertation from the standpoint of

of party history and took over the economic parts myself. I published several economic treatises from the estate in *Die Neue Zeit*. I included one particularly important treatise as an introduction to a new edition of the *Critique of Political Economy*.

However, my main task was to publish *The Theories of Surplus Value*, the first volume of which appeared in 1905 and the last in 1910.[73] Besides the fact that the manuscript was incomplete, Marx's handwriting alone made the work very laborious. But the results struck me as very much worth the effort. In this context Marx's letters to Kugelmann[74] should also be mentioned, which I published in the twentieth volume of *Die Neue Zeit* in 1902. These were also joined by a popular edition of *Capital* Volume 1, which I completed in 1913.[75]

Besides these editorial activities, two other larger, non-political works occupied me in the decade before the war. The issue of whether light could be shed on the origins of Christianity using the method of historical materialism was one of the first which had occupied me after I had come to accept that method. Inspired by reading Bruno Bauer,[76] I had published a series of articles in *Die Neue Zeit* on the origins of Christianity as far back as 1885. Münzer's movement, and the role which early Christian traditions had played within it, had once again drawn me to the topic. Some brief comments I had made about early Christianity in my introduction to the *Forerunners* had brought forth lively opposition. When it became necessary to publish a new edition of my *Forerunners*, this prompted me to carry on my previous studies on the beginnings of Christianity. The outcome was the book *Foundations of Christianity*,[77] which was published in 1908. A work of a different nature became necessary in that I was repeatedly asked whether I still held the same view on the population question which I had outlined in my first work. It was not possible to answer in two words, and the answer needed explaining. I provided the answer in my 1910 book, *Reproduction and Development in Nature and Society*.[78] In nature, the fer-

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a hostile liberal, but later updated and revised the material. This episode was later dug up by the 'revisionists' in the party so as to discredit him; cf. Frölich 2013 [1938], pp. 36–43. There still exists no English-language translation of Mehring's important work.

73 Marx 1975–2004; Marx 1975–2004a; Marx 1975–2004b.

74 Marx's letters to Ludwig Kugelmann were published as twelve separate contributions to *Die Neue Zeit* in 1902.

75 According to Werner Blumenberg (Blumenberg 1960, p. 93) this was actually published, along with an introduction by Kautsky, in 1914: Kautsky 1914a.

76 Bruno Bauer (1809–82) was a Left Hegelian philosopher and historian who wrote extensively on the New Testament and the origins of Christianity, such as in Bauer 1998 [1877].

77 Kautsky 2007 [1908].

78 Kautsky 1910a.

tility of each organism adapts to its living conditions. In its lifetime, it produces on average the same number of offspring as those who die off during the same period. A species which produces less offspring will soon die out and a species which produces more will soon exhaust its scope of sustenance. Neither species is able to maintain itself.

This is the law of population in the natural world, which I opposed to Malthus's arithmetic and geometric progression. As soon as the soil – the plants' scope of sustenance – is taken up by the number of plants to which it is suited, it is no longer capable of expansion and the consumption needs of herbivorous animals are unable to continue to expand either. This also defines the carnivores' scope of sustenance. It is also incapable of further expansion. Thus in nature we do not see the constant expansion of the scope of sustenance and the even more rapid desire for expansion on the part of the organisms living from them, but a constant balance between all of the organisms.

Human beings and their technology disturb this balance. They create new conditions of life which either increase or decrease their fruitfulness. They are thus able to extend their scope of sustenance, but not at all times and only in certain circumstances. This can result in the most diverse population laws. Under certain conditions, the population can grow faster than the scope of sustenance, causing misery, exodus and war. Under other conditions, the population will decrease, while their mode of production demands that it increase in size. Here society can degenerate, the community can eventually perish and the human race can become extinct. Each society has its own particular population law. In the beginnings of industrial, capitalist society, the fear of overpopulation is predominant, yet the fear of depopulation has increasingly asserted itself for decades. We do not know what the population law of socialist society will be. Yet we do not have the slightest reason to fear that it will perish as a result of overpopulation. Until now high intellectual culture was not propitious to proliferation, whether it reduced natural fertility or promoted the use of artificial prevention.

This view is certainly different from the one I arrived at in 1878. Yet my current point of view is as far removed from the original teleological anti-Malthusianism as my original one was. The book dealt with a border area between natural and social science. This area had interested me ever since I began to think about economics and society. Alongside the need to revise my original view on the population question, I was led to this border area by the agitation of the racial theorists, who had influenced the social thought of our time. My engagement with them brought forth the work *Are the Jews a Race?*[79]

79 Kautsky 1926 [1914].

At first this book went under in the rage of World War I, the beginnings of which it blundered into.

IX

This war, which shook the entire world, threw crowns into the sand and shattered empires, bringing about a fundamental upheaval in my affairs and everybody else's in Germany.

Social democracy as a whole had been united in its striving to prevent war. Yet when the war broke out in spite of this resistance, it split over the fateful question of whether or not to back its national governments during the war, even if it considered the government's policies to be disastrous. The vast majority approved the war credits, a small minority opposed them. I adopted a middle position in line with that taken by Bebel and Liebknecht in 1870, when they abstained from voting, seeking to place themselves neither on the side of the Prussian king nor on the side of the French emperor.

If the objections to my approach were correct, namely that it was no longer possible for a party as large as German social democracy to abstain, then I demanded that the war credits should not be unconditionally rejected or approved. My view was that social democracy may only approve a government's war credits if the latter ceremoniously committed itself in public to conduct the war merely for purposes of defence with the aim of ending the conflict as quickly as possible through a peace of understanding without annexations, reparations or territorial violations.

In times that are as passionately stirred as those of war or revolution, it is a matter of choosing this side or the other. Thus I was almost entirely alone in my middle position. And this did not change throughout the war or even long after it. In the 40 years from the beginning of my party career until the outbreak of war, I had always agreed with the majority of that party, whereas its critics on its left and right only made up a small minority. Now, however, I found myself in opposition to the great majority without satisfying the minority. The extreme left led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, known as the Spartacists during the war, had already fought me before 1914, but they now did so with twice the severity. This did not fail to have an effect on the more moderate section of the opposition. This section continued to respect me, but not without various concerns.

At that time, I came into close contact with Bernstein. In the war, our paths crossed again. Each of us retained his own particular theoretical nature, but we now almost always agreed on our practical actions. And so it has remained to this day.

Naturally, my literary activity during the war was strongly suppressed by the military censor. My main efforts were aimed at preparing a reasonable peace. In 1915 I published *Nation State, Imperialist State and Confederation*,[80] in which I defended the need to respect national self-determination when drawing up peace treaties and took the field against the view enthusiastically championed by both the right and the left at the time – by Cunow[81] and [Karl] Radek – namely that the imperialist conquest state had become necessary due to the needs of the economy, and would persist as long as capitalism did.

The book was plagued by the military censor to such an extent that it never found any interest amongst the public. I had more luck with the books *The United States of Central Europe* (1916),[82] *Serbia and Belgium*[83] and *Alsace Lorraine*[84] (both 1917) and finally *The Emancipation of Nations* (1918).[85] By contrast, immediately before the war came to an end I once again encountered the fierce resistance of the military censor. The censor was concerned about the proof I provided to show that the war economy meant nothing other than the beginning of a socialist economy. I thus had to have my essay on *War Marxism*[86] published in Vienna in April 1918. Even before this, some of my works had to seek refuge there on occasion.

The longer the war lasted, the more keenly I was occupied with the matter of how to return from the quite abnormal conditions of the war economy to a normal peacetime economy without any major crises. Strangely, the military censor greatly held me back in this. I was unable to publish an article on the

80 Translated in Day and Gaido (eds.) 2011a, pp. 791–849.

81 Heinrich Cunow (1862–1936) was a leading SPD intellectual and prominent member of the anti-revisionist wing of the party. He was a member of the *Vorwärts* editorial board and taught at the SPD party school alongside Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring. In the early days of World War I, however, he started to draw 'German victory' conclusions similar to those of Lensch, Parvus and others, arguing that: 'As soon as England entered the war, it acquired a quite different status' (quoted in Sigel 1976, p. 22). While on occasion his belligerent stance was slightly embarrassing to the SPD leadership, it could also be useful, such as when he could be called upon as a reliable replacement for Kautsky as editor of *Die Neue Zeit* in 1917, following the latter's oppositional stance to the war and the SPD leadership.

82 Kautsky 1916.

83 Kautsky 1917.

84 Kautsky 1917a.

85 According to Werner Blumenberg, this book was published in 1917, not 1918 (Blumenberg 1960, p. 99): Kautsky 1917b.

86 Kautsky 1918a; cf. Blumenberg 1960, p. 102.

'Economic Aspect of the War of Exhaustion' in Germany. I had to go to Vienna with it, where it appeared without any objections in *Der Kampf*[87] of September 1916.

In March 1918, I completed a work on the transitional economy.[88] I assumed that peace would soon have to come and considered it necessary that, before it came and placed before us the problem of a transition to a peacetime economy, we would have to consider this question from all angles. This was the purpose of my book. But the military censor repeatedly delayed its publication. It was ready to be printed in July, but only on 6 November was I able to write the preface to mark its publication. This publication then fell through during the first weeks of the revolution, when we were concerned with quite different problems to those discussed in the book. Some of its chapters have only since become topical, such as the chapter on money, which makes up a third of the book. Yet how harmless this problem appeared in 1918!

Meanwhile, my isolation in the party had deepened. The antagonism within the party towards the majority had become so trenchant that in 1917 there was an open split.[89] I considered the split to be disastrous and did my best to oppose it. This did not improve my position in relation to the majority of the new 'Independent Social Democracy', but at the same time the split itself deepened the gulf between the old party and me, so that eventually, in October 1917, the party leadership removed me from the editorial board of *Die Neue Zeit*. Dietz and I had set it up as a private publication, as under the Anti-Socialist Law it was impossible to do otherwise. But following the fall of the latter the relationship between *Die Neue Zeit* and the party had become increasingly close, so that in 1901 we thought it appropriate to make it the official property of the party. From then on, my editorial work was responsible to the party. So it was that I could be removed in 1917. This forced separation from my place of work which I had created, where I concentrated my life work for a generation and through which I had worked alongside the greatest minds of socialism at that time, on a publication I had shaped, hit me even harder in that it coincided with my extensive isolation.

This isolation was reinforced by the rise of Bolshevism. I had ignored the attacks of the Spartacists as much as possible. Polemics against oppositional

87 Kautsky 1916a; cf. Blumenberg 1960, p. 97.

88 Kautsky 1918b; cf. Blumenberg 1960, p. 102.

89 This is not entirely accurate: 33 oppositional deputies were expelled from the SPD parliamentary fraction in March 1916, when Hugo Haase spoke out against the renewal of the state of siege. By January 1917 they were out of the party as well, with the USPD being formed in April 1917.

elements under the pressure of the military censor struck me as inappropriate. Yet things were different when in Russia the Bolsheviks seized state power, broke up the Constituent Assembly and set in motion a system of terrorism against any non-Communists so as not to have to share this state power with other socialist parties. They did all this in the expectation that they could thereby, with one blow,[90] transform the whole of Russia into a completely Communist commonwealth.

As soon as I could see with some degree of clarity what was going on in Russia following the October Revolution of 1917, I considered it my duty to stand against it, as well as against the belief that such a backward country as Russia could lead the way on the path to socialism for the industrial West. I also stood against the madness that socialism could be built up with a few forceful blows, and by a privileged minority at that, in opposition to the great majority of the people, which it had to keep in check with terror and the force of arms.

In the summer of 1918, I published my first book against Bolshevism, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*,[91] which was followed by *Terrorism and Communism*[92] in 1919 and *From Democracy to State Slavery*[93] in 1921.

It is self-evident that my resolute stance against Bolshevism embittered the Spartacists, who since the Revolution called themselves Communists. But many of the Independent Social Democrats also turned against me. Even those who admitted that I was correct thought that, in the situation as it was back then, an attack against Bolshevism was synonymous with harming the Russian Revolution; in other words, that it was untimely at the very least.

My very first publication against Bolshevism produced such concerns against me amongst some of my best friends. This did not get any better following the revolution which broke out in November 1918.

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90 By contrast, when writing in defence of the Russian Revolution in 1921, Clara Zetkin notes that: '[the proletariat] cannot fly out of the hell of capitalism into the Communist paradise with a single, aspirant and powerful flap of its wings' (Zetkin 1921, p. 42).

91 Kautsky 1919 [1918].

92 Kautsky 1920 [1919].

93 Kautsky 1921a. It is yet to be translated into English. For a discussion of Kautsky's views in this text against the backdrop of his earlier writings on Russia, see Gaido and Day (eds.) 2011, pp. 54–8.

X

When the war came to an end, for me all of the deeper differences between the Majority Social Democrats and the Independent Social Democrats did too. And the tasks of the revolution could only be solved with complete unity between the socialists. In my eyes, uniting them now became an urgent necessity.

But in 1918 the contradictions which had arisen from differing views during the war, and which lasted after it, were joined by those which had emerged from Bolshevism. Instead of unity, therefore, after November 1918 there was increased discord, because now in the ranks of the socialists there were struggles between the various organisations for power, proceeding from the Communists, for whom the Bolshevik coup of 1917 was a model. Thus social democracy was unable to take what it could have done from the revolution in the situation as it was back then.

With great effort and difficulty, after 9 November there was cooperation between the Majority Socialists and the Independents. The People's Commissars[94] entrusted me with the office of Deputy to the Secretary of State in the Foreign Office. The Secretary of State Solf,[95] to whom I was attached, was only a temporary solution. When he was succeeded by Brockdorff Rantzau,[96] I found that there was a full willingness to cooperate on the part of the latter. But no sooner was he in office than the Independents argued they could no longer work together with the Majority Socialists. They left the government, and with this my work in the Foreign Office also came to an end before it had really begun. The only outcome of this activity was my gathering of documents on the outbreak of the war, which I had begun with the approval of the People's Commissars and completed with the permission of subsequent governments. In the

94 The 'People's Commissars' formed the interim government following the fall of the Kaiser in November 1918. There were three commissars from the 'Majority Socialists' of the SPD (Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann and Otto Landsberg) and three from the 'Independent Socialists' of the USPD (Hugo Haase, Wilhelm Dittmann and Emil Barth).

95 Wilhelm Solf (1862–1936) was a diplomat and statesmen who, among other things, had served as the first Governor of German Samoa and played a part in the negotiations for the armistice of 11 November 1918. He was extremely unpopular amongst the German working class and his presence as Foreign Minister in the 'all-socialist government' in 1918 was an obvious thorn in the side of its 'revolutionary' credentials.

96 Count Ulrich von Brockdorff Rantzau (1869–1928) was an ambassador and diplomat who played a key role in organising the passage of the famous sealed train in which Lenin and Karl Radek returned to Russia in 1917. He championed stern measures against radical leftists both at home and abroad. He led the German delegation to negotiate the Treaty of Versailles.

autumn of 1919, professor Schücking[97] and Count Montgelas[98] were given the task of publishing the collection in association with me under the title *The German Documents on the Outbreak of War* (four volumes).[99]

The work also prompted me to make a foray into the field of diplomacy in a commentary entitled *How the World War Arose*.[100] I soon added an appendix to it. Its title alone ('Delbrück and Wilhelm II') made clear that I objected to the great historian of war's criticisms. However, the revolution did not only send me to the Foreign Office. It almost sent me to work in a university environment. The Independents' People's Commissars asked me whether I wanted to take on a professorship at the University of Berlin, just like Cunow and Lensch, who at that point had been promoted to professorship by the SPD Commissars. They would have also accepted my professorship. I turned down their offer because I lacked the inclination to work at a teaching post and maybe even the skills to do so as well. It was for the same reason that I also turned down Eisner, who back then wanted to bring me to the University of Munich to replace the outgoing Brentano.[101]

Yet I did not evade another appointment offered to me, namely to the socialisation commission. As a socialist government, the People's Commissars of course felt obliged to consider the matter of socialisation. Yet the Majority socialists were not Bolsheviks, and nor were the Independents. They knew full well that aimless, hasty socialisation could only have disastrous effects. They convened a socialisation commission, on which not only socialists sat but also representatives of other outlooks, both scholars and practical people. The commission was supposed to investigate which branches of production were ripe for socialisation and which methods of socialisation best corresponded to the specific character of each branch. The commission did me the honour of electing me as its chairman.

97 Walter Schücking (1875–1935) was also involved in the negotiations around the Treaty of Versailles.

98 Count Max von Montgelas (1860–1938) was a Bavarian army general and diplomat who helped to draft Germany's response to charges of war guilt from the Entente powers. He was the official spokesman for the Weimar Republic at the Paris Peace Conference.

99 Kautsky, Monteglas and Schücking (eds.) 1924.

100 Kautsky 1920 [1919].

101 Lujo Brentano (1844–1931) was a German economist and *Kathedersozialist* academic who taught economics at the University of Munich between 1891 and 1914. In 1914 he signed the notorious *Manifesto of the 93* – a statement from leading academics and thinkers declaring their unequivocal support for the German war effort. He served as People's Commissar for Trade in Eisner's Munich government, but lasted only a few days in this post.

This election somewhat reminded me of that of Louis Blanc, who in 1848 the revolutionary government had appointed chairman of the Government Labour Commission, which met in Luxembourg. At that point, I asked myself: will our commission end up as unsuccessful as that in Luxembourg, to be replaced by a June battle?[102]

This time things were not as bad. German social democracy is still the largest party in Germany. Yet the elections in January 1919 did not return a majority for the party and it is my conviction that socialism cannot be brought about through the coercion of the majority by the minority. Only the joyful and energetic cooperation of the majority of the population can create a socialist mode of production superior to the capitalist mode.

The outcome of the January elections deprived the socialisation commission of a basis for effective intervention in the economy. Yet its work was not in vain. Following extensive inquiries, it drew up practical proposals for a series of important branches of production, above all for coal mining, which will receive vitality as soon as a socialist majority emerges from the nation's ballot boxes.[103]

The failure in January was not least attributable to the uprising that had initially erupted in the beginning of that month in Berlin against the social-democratic government. The worst consequences were to be feared, whether this rebellion was successful or whether it was bloodily suppressed. Thus back then I found myself amongst those who sought to mediate between the government and the insurrectionists. At that point too, the conditions for a mediating role were absent. Our efforts proved unsuccessful. There was a bloody crackdown and along with this came the disastrous consequence that had been feared, a most profound rupture in the German workers' movement.

It struck me as impossible to then join the victor, the Majority Social Democrats. On the other hand, following the unrest of January and March a growing section of the Independents was converging with the Communists. The party left the Second International at its Leipzig Congress of November 1919. It considered affiliating to the Third International. At that time my isolation in the party probably reached its zenith. I considered turning my back on German social democracy and moving to Vienna, where I would find a united party. It was in Vienna that I published my 1920 book on the past and future of the

102 That is to say, the unsuccessful popular uprising of the June Days, which began on 23 June 1848.

103 Quotes such as this are often cited as proof of the prevalent notion that Kautsky was a purely parliamentarian thinker who suffered from the illusion of 'parliamentary cretinism'. Nonetheless, it should be recalled that these words were written in *1924* – that is to say, long after Kautsky had become the *renegade* Kautsky – and that statements such as this are in flagrant contradiction to his own critique of 'parliamentary cretinism' in Parts One and Two of this publication.

International,[104] in which I came to the conclusion that if efforts to destroy the Second International were successful then the new one which would take its place would not look any different to the previous one after all.

Before I could move to Vienna, I accepted in August 1920 an invitation from the Georgian government to go and visit that country. I was excited to get to know this unique state formation, where on an overwhelmingly agricultural basis a purely social democratic government ruled successfully with democratic methods, with the consent of the great majority of the population and without having to renounce any of its socialist principles. That was quite a paradoxical phenomenon which was worthy of closer study. The result of my three-month stay in Georgia was my book *Georgia: A Social-Democratic Peasant Republic*.[105]

The Georgian method struck me as a model for those areas of the East where a modern, metropolitan, well-organised and educated proletariat represented the strongest force amongst the politically and economically trained classes, with the result that proletarian rule is unavoidable, but given the backwardness of industry and the prevalence of small peasant enterprises an all-round socialism is impossible. Unfortunately the Bolshevik invasion, which occurred six weeks after my departure from Tiflis, crushed this promising flower before it was able to blossom.

When I returned from Georgia, I found German social democracy to be in a completely new situation. The Halle Congress of October 1920 had seen a split in the Independent Social Democracy. One wing had joined the Communists. The other had refused to do so and came into conflict with the other wing, a conflict which was increasingly coming to a head. At the same time, political relations in Germany had straightened out to such an extent that for any thinking socialist the road to be taken was clear. Even the only remaining disputed question of whether to participate in a coalition government gradually lost its divisive force. The two great currents of the social democratic workers' movement in Germany increasingly flowed parallel to each other in the same direction, and it was only a matter of time before they would flow in the same river bed again.

Conditions were now such that it was possible to take up the fight for socialist unification successfully. All my intentions to leave Germany then vanished. I took part in the movement for unification with all my might. I hoped to best promote it by drawing the conclusions from the revolution. I investigated the extent to which its lessons had caused us to change or to add to the image

104 Kautsky 1920.
105 Kautsky 1921.

of socialism we had made for ourselves in our experience in the two decades before the war. In paving the way for a new programme corresponding to our new insights, I hoped to create a common ground between both of the social-democratic parties. Thus my most recent book *The Proletarian Revolution and its Programme* came into existence.

Hardly had it appeared, in June 1922, when we heard the unfortunate shots which did for Walter Rathenau.[106] Although he was no social democrat, his blood nonetheless became the glue which cemented the two parts of social democracy together again. A few months later, the unification was complete.

I saw proof of the fact that this unification was not merely organisational in nature but also one based on ideas and on the full compliance of the thinking of the masses, in that most parts of my book were approvingly absorbed by the party press of both tendencies. There was only one exception – only one party publication in the united party was hostile to me: its scientific publication, *Die Neue Zeit*, which until 1917 had formed no small part of my life work. A strange irony of history, but one which by no means had a tragic effect on me in light of the tremendous change in my situation, which within a year had altered from the greatest isolation into its exact opposite. I had never lost the respect, sympathy and confidence of my party friends, even when our differences were at their sharpest. But now I had also finally won their general approval once more, perhaps to a greater extent than before the war.

Unless the consequences of the Ruhr catastrophe[107] put a spoke in the wheel, following all the trials and tribulations since 1914 my final years thus promise to reach a reconciliatory conclusion. It is not up to me to decide whether my life work has served social progress, whether it has gone in the right direction. Yet I must say that for the last fifty years of my life, since I embarked in the particular direction I did, I have never gone astray. I had to bury several illusions, recognise and correct several errors and until recently my views had to go through several developments. But every new insight only served to convince me further of the correctness of the direction I had embarked on and of the method I was applying.

So I will die as I have lived, an incorrigible Marxist.[108]

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106 Walther Rathenau (1867–1922) was a prominent German industrialist and liberal Foreign Minister who signed the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo with Russia, where both sides renounced any territorial or financial claims against each other in the aftermath of World War I. He was assassinated by the German far right after being in office for less than six months.

107 This refers to France's military occupation of the industrial Ruhr region of Germany in January 1923, after the latter had defaulted on its onerous war reparations to the victorious Entente powers.

108 This text was first published in Meiner (ed.) 1924, pp. 117–53 as 'Das Werden eines Marxisten'. This translation is based on a reprint in Benedikt Kautsky (ed.) 1954, pp. 11–44.

APPENDIX

Synoptic Overview of the Drafts of the Erfurt Programme (1891)

I–II

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

1. The separation of the worker from the means of labour – the land and the soil, collieries, pits, mines, machines and tools – and the passing of these into the general ownership of one section of society, has led to this society being divided into two classes: the working classes and the propertied classes.

2. In the hands of the monopolists, the means of labour necessary for the existence of society have become means of exploitation. The workers' dependency on the monopolists' ownership of the means of labour caused by this is the basis of exploitation in all its forms: the lack of political rights, social misery, stunted physical growth and intellectual vilification.

Engels's Critique, 29 June 1891

1. Get rid of pits and mines. Railways and other means of transport.

2. In the hands of their appropriators (or their owners) the social means of labour have become means of exploitation. The economic subjugation of the worker by the appropriator of the means of labour, that is to say, of the means of livelihood, conditioned thereby, is the basis of slavery in all its forms: social misery, mental degradation and political dependence.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

1. The separation of the workers from the means of labour – the land and the soil, collieries, pits, mines, machines and tools – and the passing of these into the general ownership of one section of society, has led to society being divided into two classes: the working classes and the propertied classes.

2. In the hands of their appropriators (or their owners) the social means of labour have become means of exploitation. The economic subjugation of the worker by the appropriator of the means of labour, that is to say, of the means of livelihood, conditioned thereby, is the basis of slavery in all its forms: social misery, mental degradation and political dependence.

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The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

1. The industrial development of bourgeois society invariably leads to the ruin of small business, which is based on the private ownership by the worker of his means of production. It separates the worker from the means of production and turns him into a propertyless proletarian, while the means of production become the monopoly of a small number of capitalists and large landowners.

2. Hand-in-hand with this, there is the centralisation of these fractured small businesses into colossal firms, the development of the tool into a machine, the gigantic growth in the productivity of human labour. But all the benefits of this transformation are monopolised by the capitalists and large landowners. For the proletariat and the sinking middle classes it means an increase in the insecurity of their existence, of misery, oppression, degradation and exploitation.

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

1. The economic development of bourgeois society invariably leads to the ruin of small business, which is based on the private ownership by the worker of his means of production. It separates the worker from his means of production and turns him into a propertyless proletarian, while the means of production – the land and the soil, raw materials – increasingly become the monopoly of a relatively small number of capitalists and large landowners.

2. Hand-in-hand with this monopolisation of the means of production, there is the centralisation of these fractured small businesses into colossal enterprises, the development of the tool into a machine, the gigantic growth in the productivity of human labour. But all the benefits of this transformation are monopolised by the capitalists and large landowners. For the proletariat and the sinking middle classes – the petty bourgeoisie and farmers – it means an increase in the insecurity of their existence, of misery, pressure, oppression, degradation and exploitation.

The Erfurt Programme, October 1891

1. The economic development of bourgeois society invariably leads to the ruin of small business, which is based on the private ownership by the worker of his means of production. It separates the worker from his means of production and turns him into a propertyless proletarian, while the means of production become the monopoly of a relatively small number of capitalists and large landowners.

2. Hand-in-hand with this monopolisation of the means of production, there is the displacement of these fractured small businesses by colossal enterprises, the development of the tool into a machine, the gigantic growth in the productivity of human labour. But all the benefits of this transformation are monopolised by the capitalists and large landowners. For the proletariat and the sinking middle classes – petty bour-

geoisie and farmers – it means an increase in the insecurity of their existence, of misery, of pressure, of oppression, of degradation, of exploitation.

III–IV

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

3. Under the rule of the individual owners – capitalists, big landowners, the bourgeoisie – the wealth created by the exploited and the means of labour are concentrated in the hands of the exploiters with growing speed – ever more uneven becomes the distribution of the product of labour, ever greater becomes the number, and misery of, the proletarians, ever more massive the army of superfluous labourers, ever more stark the antagonism between exploiters and the exploited, ever more bitter the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which divides modern society into two hostile camps and constitutes the common characteristic of all industrialised countries.

4. The planlessness that is grounded in the nature of capitalist private production creates those ever longer-lasting crises and work shortages that make the worker's situation even worse, entail the ruin of broader layers of people, cause general economic and political insecurity and plunge the whole of society into unrest and confusion.

Engels's Critique, 29 June 1891

3. Under this exploitation, the wealth created by the exploited is concentrated in the hands of the exploiters – the capitalists and big landowners – with growing speed; the distribution of the product of labour between the exploiters and exploited becomes ever more uneven, and the numbers and insecurity of the proletariat grow ever greater, etc.

4. 'Private' (production) **delete** … deteriorate, by the ruin of the urban and rural middle classes, the petty bourgeois and small peasants, widen the chasm between the haves and have-nots, make general insecurity the normal state of society and prove that the class of the appropriators of the social means of labour has lost the vocation and ability for economic and political leadership.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

4. The planlessness that is grounded in the nature of capitalist private production creates those ever longer-lasting crises and work shortages that make the worker's situation even worse, that further widen the gulf between the propertied and the propertyless by ruining the urban and rural middle classes – the petty bourgeoisie and the small farmers – that turn generalised insecurity into a normal state of affairs and that

prove how the class of the appropriators of the social means of labour have lost the vocation and ability for economic and political leadership.

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

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The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

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The Erfurt programme, October 1891

3. Ever greater becomes the number of proletarians, ever more massive the army of excess workers, ever more stark the antagonism between exploiters and the exploited, ever more bitter the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which divides modern society into two hostile camps and constitutes the common characteristic of all industrialised countries.

4. The gulf between the propertied and the propertyless is further widened by crises that are grounded in the nature of the capitalist mode of production, crises that are becoming more extensive and more devastating, that elevate this general uncertainty into the normal state of society and furnish proof that the powers of productivity have grown beyond society's control, that the private ownership of the means of production has become incompatible with their appropriate application and full development.

V

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

5. The aim and task of social democracy is to put an end to this situation, one that is becoming more and more unbearable from day to day, by abolishing the [*sic* – cf. Engels below] causes and by winning the emancipation of the working class.

Engels's Critique*, 29 June 1891*

5. 'its causes' … [runs on into Paragraph 6].

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

5. The aim and task of social democracy is to put an end to this situation, one that is becoming more and more unbearable from day to day, by abolishing its causes and by winning the emancipation of the working class.

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

5. The private ownership of the means of production, once the means for securing for the producer the ownership of his product, has today become the means for expropriating farmers, artisans and small merchants, and for putting the non-workers into possession of the product of the workers. Only the transformation of the capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social property and the transformation of the production of goods into socialist production carried on, by and for society can cause the large enterprise and the constantly growing productivity of social labour to change, for the hitherto exploited classes, from a source of misery and oppression into a source of welfare and universal, harmonious advancement.

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

5. The private ownership of the means of production, once the means for securing for the producer the ownership of his product, has today become the means for expropriating farmers, artisans and small merchants, and for putting the non-workers – capitalists, large landowners – into possession of the product of the workers. Only the transformation of the capitalist private ownership of the means of production – land and soil, pits and mines, raw materials, tools, machines, means of transportation – into social property and the transformation of the production of goods into socialist production carried on by and for society can cause the large enterprise and the constantly growing productivity of social labour to change, for the hitherto exploited classes, from a source of misery and oppression into a source of the greatest welfare and universal, harmonious advancement.

The Erfurt Programme, October 1891

5. The private ownership of the means of production, once the means for securing for the producer the ownership of his product, has today become the means for expropriating farmers, artisans and small merchants, and for putting the non-workers – capitalists, large landowners – into possession of the product of the workers. Only the transformation of the capitalist private ownership of the means of production – land and soil, pits and mines, raw materials, tools, machines, means of transportation – into social property and the transformation of the production of goods into socialist production carried on by and for society can cause the large enterprise and the constantly growing productivity of social labour to change for the hitherto exploited classes from a source of misery and oppression into a source of the greatest welfare and universal, harmonious advancement.

VI–VII

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

6. Accordingly, the Social Democratic Party of Germany strives to transform the means of labour – land and soil, pits and mines, raw materials, tools, machines, means of transportation – into the common property of society, and to transform capitalist production into socialist production; capitalist society itself has created the material and intellectual conditions for this.

7. The emancipation of the working class can only be the work of the working class itself, because all other classes and parties, notwithstanding the conflicts of interest between them, stand on the ground of the private ownership of the means of production and have as their common goal the preservation and reinforcement of capitalism.

Engels's Critique, 29 June 1891

6. … and the transformation of capitalist production on behalf of individuals or joint-stock companies into socialist production on behalf of society as a whole and according to a preconceived plan, a transformation for which capitalist society itself creates the material and spiritual conditions, and by which alone can be achieved the emancipation of the working class and with it the emancipation of all members of society without exception.

7. The emancipation of the working class can be the work only of the working class itself. It is self-evident that the working class cannot leave its emancipation either to the capitalists and big landowners, its opponents and exploiters, or to the petty bourgeois and small peasants, who, being stifled by competition on the part of the big exploiters, have no choice but to join either their ranks or those of the workers.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

6. Accordingly, the Social Democratic Party of Germany strives to transform the means of labour – land and soil, pits and mines, raw materials, tools, machines, means of transportation – into the common property of society, and to transform capitalist production into socialist production; capitalist society itself has created, and continues to create, the sole material and intellectual [*geistig*] conditions through which the emancipation of the working class, and with it the emancipation of all members of society, can be realised.

7. The Social Democratic Party has nothing in common with so-called state socialism, the system of nationalisation for fiscal purposes, which substitutes private entrepreneurs with the state, thereby consolidating the power of the worker's economic exploitation and political oppression of the worker in one hand.

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

6. This social transformation amounts to the emancipation not only of the working class, but of the entire human race suffering from current conditions. But it can only be the work of the working class. All other classes stand on the ground of private ownership of the means of production. The proletariat is the only class whose interests more and more decisively press for the abolition of this private ownership.

7. The struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation is necessarily a political struggle. Without political rights, the working class cannot carry on its economic struggles … [runs on into Paragraph 8]

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

6. This social transformation amounts to the emancipation not only of the working class, but of the entire human race suffering from current conditions. But this emancipation can only be the work of the working class, because all other classes stand on the ground of the private ownership of the means of production. The proletariat is the only class whose interests more and more decisively press for the abolition of this private ownership, an endeavour for which the capitalist mode of production's increasingly rapid economic development is paving the way, against the will of the ruling classes.

7. [Blank.]

The Erfurt Programme, October 1891

6. This social transformation amounts to the emancipation not only of the proletariat, but of the entire human race, which is suffering from current conditions. But it can only be the work of the working class, because all other classes, notwithstanding the conflicts of interest between them, stand on the ground of the private ownership of the means of production and have as their common goal the preservation of the foundations of contemporary society.

7. The struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation is necessarily a political struggle. Without political rights, the working class cannot carry on its economic struggles … [runs on into Paragraph 8]

VIII–IX

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft

8. In recognising that the emancipation of the working class is not a national task, but a social one, in which the workers of all civilised countries are equally involved, and one that can only be resolved through their international cooperation, the Social Demo-

cratic Party feels and declares itself to be one with the class-conscious workers of all other countries.

9. The Social Democratic Party has nothing in common with so-called state socialism: the system of fiscal nationalisation which substitutes the private entrepreneurs with the state, but which places the double yoke of the economic exploitation and political oppression of the worker.

Engels's Critique, 29 June 1891

8. … with workers conscious of their class position, etc.

9. … places … and thereby concentrates in the same hands the power of economic exploitation and political oppression of the workers.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

8. The emancipation of the working class can only be the work of the working class itself, because all other classes and parties, notwithstanding the conflicts of interest between them, stand on the ground of the private ownership of the means of production and have as their common goal the preservation and reinforcement of the foundations of contemporary society.

9. The interests of the working class are the same in all countries with a capitalist mode of production; with the expansion of global commerce, and of production for the world market, the position of the worker in every country becomes increasingly dependent on the position of workers in other countries; the emancipation of the working class is, therefore, not a national task but a social one, in which the workers of all civilised countries are equally involved. Recognising this, the German Social Democratic Party feels and declares itself to be one with the class-conscious workers of all other countries.

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

8. … without political rights. It cannot bring about the transfer of the means of production into collective possession without first having obtained political power. It is the task of the Social Democratic Party to shape the struggle of the working class into a conscious and unified one and to point out the inherent necessity of its goals.

9. The emancipation of the working class is a task in which the workers of all civilised countries are equally involved. The Social Democratic Party of Germany is fully conscious of the international solidarity of the proletariat and determined to fulfil all of the duties that arise from this.

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

8. It is the task of the Social Democratic Party to shape the struggle of the working class into a conscious and unified one and to point out the inherent necessity of its goals. Because they stand on the ground of private ownership of the means of production, all other parties are a reactionary mass[1] *vis-a-vis* the Social Democratic Party.

9. The interests of the working class are the same in all countries with a capitalist mode of production. With the expansion of global commerce, and of production for the world market, the position of the worker in every country becomes increasingly dependent on the position of workers in others. The emancipation of the working class is thus a task in which the workers of all civilised countries are equally involved.

10. The Social Democratic Party of Germany is fully conscious of the international solidarity of the proletariat and determined to fulfil all of the duties that arise from this.

The Erfurt Programme, October 1891

8. … economic struggles and develop its economic organisation. It cannot bring about the transfer of the means of production into the possession of the community without first having obtained political power. It is the task of the Social Democratic Party to shape the struggle of the working class into a conscious and unified one and to point out the inherent necessity of its goals.

9. The interests of the working class are the same in all countries with a capitalist mode of production. With the expansion of global commerce, and of production for the world market, the position of the worker in every country becomes increasingly dependent on the position of workers in others. The emancipation of the working class is thus a task in which the workers of all civilised countries are equally involved. Recognising this, the German Social Democratic Party feels and declares itself to be one with the class-conscious workers of all other countries.

1 In Gilcher-Holtey's book (Gilcher-Holtey 1986), where these drafts are collated in German, this section includes the term 'reaktionäre Waffe' ('reactionary weapon'). Given the importance of the Lassallean term 'reaktionäre Masse' in the history of German social democracy, I have translated it as 'reactionary mass'.

X–XI

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

10. The German Social Democratic Party does not fight for new class privileges and class rights, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, for the equal right of all, without distinction of sex or race. In its fight for the emancipation of the working class, the fight for the emancipation of humanity, social democracy champions all demands, measures and institutions that are suited to improving the situation of the people in general and the working class in particular.

11. The German Social Democratic Party therefore champions the following demands:

1. Universal, equal and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all elections, for all nationals over the age of 21 without distinction of sex. Proportional representation. Elections and referenda to be held on Sundays or public holidays.

Engels's Critique, June 29 1891

10. … class rule and the classes themselves and for equal rights and equal duties of all without, etc. … origin (delete end). In its struggle for … mankind it is obstructed by Germany's backward political state. First and foremost, it has to conquer room for movement, to abolish the massive survivals of feudalism and absolutism, in short, to do the work which the German bourgeois parties were and still are too cowardly to carry out. Hence it has, at least at present, to include also such demands in its programme, which in other cultural countries have already been implemented by the bourgeoisie.

Commentary: The political demands of the draft have one great fault. It lacks precisely what should have been said. If all the 10 demands were granted we should indeed have more diverse means of achieving our main political aim, but the aim itself would in no wise have been achieved.

Which are these ticklish, but very significant points?

First. If one thing is certain it is that our party and the working class can only come to power under the form of a democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the Great French Revolution has already shown. It would be inconceivable for our best people to become ministers under an emperor, like Miquel.[2] It would seem that from a legal point of view it is inadvisable to include the demand for a republic directly in the programme, although this was possible even under Louis Phillippe in France, and is now in Italy. But the fact that in Germany it is not

2 A reference to Johannes von Miquel (1828–1901) who in his youth was heavily influenced by Marx's work. However, he went on to become a leading member of the liberal German National Association and, following the fall of Bismarck in 1890, became Prussian minister of finance.

permitted to advance even a republican party programme openly, proves how totally mistaken is the belief that a republic, and not only a republic, but also communist society, can be established in a cosy, peaceful way.

However, the question of the republic could possibly be passed by. What, however, in my opinion should and could be included is the demand for the concentration of all political power in the hands of the people's representatives. That would suffice for the time being if it is impossible to go any further.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

10. The Social Democratic Party does not fight for new class privileges, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, for equal rights and equal obligations for all, without distinction of sex or race. In this liberation struggle, social democracy, as the representative not only of the wage workers, but of the exploited and oppressed as a whole, champions all demands, measures and institutions that are suited to improving the situation of the people in general and the working class in particular.

11. Presently, the Social Democratic Party of Germany therefore champions the following demands:

1. Universal, equal and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all elections and referenda, for all citizens of the Reich over the age of 21 without distinction of sex. Proportional representation. Elections and referenda to be held on Sundays or public holidays. Remuneration for the elected representatives.

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

10. The German Social Democratic Party does not fight for new class privileges and class rights, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, for equal rights and equal obligations for all, without distinction of sex or race. In today's society as well, it fights not only the exploitation and oppression of wage workers in society, but also every manner of exploitation and oppression.

11. Presently, the Social Democratic Party of Germany therefore advocates the following demands:

1. Full self-government of the people in the Reich, the state, the provinces and the municipalities (the election of public bodies by the people and their responsibility for all administrative bodies). Annual voting on taxes. The right to refuse to pay tax. Direct participation of the people in legislation by means of the right of proposal and rejection.

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

10. The German Social Democratic Party therefore does not fight for new class privileges and class rights, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, for

equal rights and equal obligations for all, without distinction of sex or race. Starting from these views, it fights not only the exploitation and oppression of wage workers in society today, but every manner of exploitation and oppression, whether directed against a class, party, sex, or race.

11. In accordance with these principles, the Social Democratic Party first of all demands:

1. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all elections, for all citizens of the Reich over the age of twenty, without distinction of sex. Proportional representation. For elections to be carried out on a legal day of rest. Remuneration for the elected representatives. For the abolition of all restrictions on individual political rights, with the exception of the mentally incompetent.

The Erfurt Programme, October 1891

10. The German Social Democratic Party therefore does not fight for new class privileges and class rights, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, for equal rights and equal obligations for all, without distinction of sex or birth. Starting from these views, it fights not only the exploitation and oppression of wage workers in society today, but every manner of exploitation and oppression, whether directed against a class, party, sex, or race.

11. Proceeding from these principles, the German Social Democratic Party demands, first of all:

1. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all elections, for all citizens of the Reich over the age of twenty, without distinction of sex. Proportional representation, and, until this is introduced, legal redistribution of electoral districts after every census. Two-year legislative periods. Elections to be held on a legal holiday. Compensation for elected representatives. Suspension of every restriction on political rights, except in the case of legal incapacity.

POINTS 2, 3 and 4

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft

2. Direct legislation by the people, that is to say, the right of nomination and rejection.

3. Decisions on war and peace to be made by the elected representatives of the people. Establishment of an international arbitration court.

4. Abolish all laws that restrict or suppress freedom of expression and the right of association and assembly.

Engels's Critique

See above.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

2. Direct participation of the people in legislation by means of the rights of nomination and rejection. Self-administration of the people in Reich, state, province and municipality. Annual voting of taxes. The right to refuse to pay taxes.

3. Decisions on war and peace to be made by the elected representatives of the people. Establishment of an international court of arbitration.

4. Abolition of all laws that restrict and suppress freedom of expression and the right of association and assembly.

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

2. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage for all citizens of the Reich over the age of twenty, without distinction of sex for all elections and polls. Holding of elections and referenda on legal holidays. Compensation for the elected representatives. Redrawing of electoral boundaries following every census. Proportional representation.

3. Education of all to bear arms. Transformation of the standing army into a militia. All international disputes to be settled through arbitration. Decisions on war and peace to be made by the people.

4. Abolition of all laws that restrict and suppress freedom of expression and the right of association and assembly.

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

2. Direct legislation by the people by means of the rights of nomination and rejection. Self-government of the people in Reich, state, province and municipality. Election by the people of the authorities who are accountable to them. Annual voting of taxes. The right to refuse to pay taxes.

3. Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army. The representative body of the people to determine questions of war and peace. Settlement of all international disputes by an international court of arbitration.

4. Abolition of all laws that restrict and suppress freedom of expression and the right of association and assembly.

The Erfurt Programme, October 1891

2. Direct legislation by the people by means of the rights of nomination and rejection. Self-determination and self-government of the people in Reich, state, province and municipality. Election by the people of magistrates, who are answerable and liable to them. Annual voting of taxes.

3. Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army. The representative body of the people to determine questions of war and peace. Settlement of all international disputes by arbitration.

4. Abolition of all laws that place women at a disadvantage compared with men in matters of public or private law.

POINTS 5, 6, 7 and 8

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

5. Abolition of all expenditures from public funds for ecclesiastical and religious purposes. Ecclesiastical and religious communities are to be regarded as private associations.

6. Secularisation of schools. Compulsory attendance at public elementary school. Free education and educational materials in all public educational institutions.

7. Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army.

8. Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people.

Engels's Critique

Second. The reconstitution of Germany. On the one hand, the system of small states must be abolished – just try to revolutionise society while there are the Bavarian-Württemberg reservation rights – and the map of present-day Thuringia, for example, is such a sorry sight. On the other hand, Prussia must cease to exist and must be broken up into self-governing provinces for the specific Prussianism to stop weighing on Germany. The system of small states and Prussianism are the two sides of the antithesis now gripping Germany in a vice, in which one side must always serve as the excuse and justification for the existence of the other.

What should take its place? In my view, the proletariat can only use the form of the one and indivisible republic.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

5. Abolition of all expenditures from public funds for ecclesiastical and religious purposes. Ecclesiastical and religious communities are to be regarded as private associations.

6. Secularisation of schools. Compulsory attendance at public elementary school. Free education and educational materials in all public educational institutions.

7. Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army.

8. Free administration of justice and free legal aid. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people.

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

5. Removal of all of the privileges of the ecclesiastical and religious communities and the abolition of all expenditures from public funds for these purposes.

6. Secularisation of schools. Reorganisation of the education system on a comprehensive school basis. Compulsory attendance at public schools up until the age of 14. Free education and educational materials for the duration of obligatory school attendance, as well as in all higher educational institutions for children of poor parents.

7. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people. Abolition of the obligation to be represented in court. Compensation for those wrongly convicted as well as for those wrongly arrested. Free administration of justice and free legal assistance.

8. Free medical care and medicines.

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

5. Abolition of all expenditures from public funds for ecclesiastical and religious purposes. Religion is a private affair. Ecclesiastical and religious communities are to be regarded as private associations.

6. Secularisation of schools. Compulsory attendance at public elementary school. Free education, educational materials and meals in the public elementary schools, as well as in the higher educational institutions for those pupils selected for further education by virtue of their abilities.

7. Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people. Compensation for individuals unjustly accused, imprisoned or sentenced.

8. Free medical care, including midwifery and medicines. Free burial.

The Erfurt Programme

5. Abolition of all laws that limit or suppress the free expression of opinion and restrict or suppress the right of association and assembly. Declaration that religion is a private matter. Abolition of all expenditures from public funds for ecclesiastical and religious purposes. Ecclesiastical and religious communities are to be regarded as private associations that regulate their affairs entirely autonomously.

6. Secularisation of schools. Compulsory attendance at the public elementary and lower secondary schools. Free education, free educational materials, and free meals in the public *Volksschulen*, as well as in the higher educational institutions for those boys and girls considered qualified for further education by virtue of their abilities.

7. Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people. Appeal in criminal cases. Compensation for individuals unjustly accused, imprisoned, or sentenced. Abolition of capital punishment.

8. Free medical care, including midwifery and medicines. Free burial.

POINTS 9, 10 and 1(a)/1(b)

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

9. Free medical care and medicines.

10. Progressive income, capital and inheritance tax to cover all public expenditures, to the extent that they are to be paid for by taxation. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs and other economic and political measures that sacrifice the interests of the community to those of a privileged few.

For the protection of the working class, the German Social Democratic Party demands:

1. Effective national and international worker-protection policies on the following basis:
   (a) Fixing of a normal working day of no more than eight hours;
   (b) Prohibition of gainful employment for children under the age of fourteen;

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

9. Free medical care and medicines.

10. Graduated income, capital and inheritance tax to cover all public expenditures, to the extent that they are to be paid for by taxation. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs and other economic measures that subordinate the interests of the community to those of a privileged few.

For the protection of the working class, the German Social Democratic Party demands:

1. Effective national and international worker-protection policies on the following basis:
   (a) Fixing of a normal working day of no more than eight hours;
   (b) Prohibition of gainful employment for children under the age of fourteen;

The Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, August 1891*

9. Legal establishment of increased poor relief. The right to poor relief. Abolition of the political disadvantages bound up with support.

10. Income and inheritance tax graduated according to the origin and amount of income and extent of inheritance to cover all public expenditures, insofar as they are to be paid for by taxation. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs and other economic measures that subordinate the interests of the community to those of a privileged few.

For the protection of the working class, the German Social Democratic Party demands first of all:

1. Effective national and international worker-protection legislation on the following basis:

(a) Fixing of a normal working day of no more than eight hours;
(b) Prohibition of gainful employment for children under the age of fourteen;

The 'Bebelised' Version of the Die Neue Zeit *Editorial Board's Draft, October 1891*

9. Progressive income, capital and inheritance tax to cover all public expenditures, insofar as they are to be paid for by taxation. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs and other economic and political measures that sacrifice the interests of the community to those of a privileged few.

For the protection of the working class, the German Social Democratic Party demands first of all:

1. Effective national and international worker-protection laws on the following basis:
   (a) Fixing of a normal working day of no more than eight hours;
   (b) Prohibition of gainful employment for children under the age of fourteen;

The Erfurt Programme, October 1891

9. Graduated income and property tax to pay for all public expenditures, insofar as they are to be paid for by taxation. Inheritance tax, graduated according to the size of the inheritance and the degree of kinship. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs and other economic and political measures that sacrifice the interests of the community to those of a privileged few.

For the protection of the working class, the German Social Democratic Party demands first of all:

1. Effective national and international worker-protection laws/legislation on the following basis:
   (a) Fixing of a normal working day of no more than eight hours
   (b) Prohibition of gainful employment for children under the age of fourteen;

PARAGRAPHS 1(C)–5

The Party Leadership's Internal Draft, 18 June 1891

(c) Prohibition of night work, except in those industries that, by their nature, require night work for technical reasons or for reasons of public welfare;
(d) Prohibition of women's work in branches of industry where the work has a negative effect on female health;

(e) Prohibition of night work for women and young workers under the age of 18;
(f) An uninterrupted rest period of at least 36 hours every week for every worker;
(g) Prohibition of the truck system;
(h) Monitoring of all workshops and industrial enterprises, including of cottage industry, by proctors employed by the Reich.

2. Safeguarding of the freedom of association against infringements by the employer.
3. Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers' insurance, with decisive participation by the workers in its administration.

For the regulation and monitoring of working conditions, the German Social Democratic Party demands a Reich labour department, labour exchange bureaus and the formation of chambers of labour representation, one half of whose members are to be elected from the workers, the other half from the employers.

The Party Leadership's Official Draft, 4 July 1891

(c) Prohibition of night work, except in those industries that, by their nature, require night work for technical reasons or for reasons of public welfare;
(d) An uninterrupted rest period of at least 36 hours every week for every worker;
(e) Prohibition of the truck system.

2. Monitoring of all industrial enterprises and regulation of working conditions in the city and the countryside to be carried out by a Reich labour department, district labour bureaus and chambers of labour.
3. Equality of agricultural labourers and domestic servants with industrial workers; abolition of the Prussian Servants' Law.[3]
4. Safeguarding of the freedom of association.
5. Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers' insurance, with decisive participation by the workers in its administration.

3 The Prussian Servants' Law required servants to keep an account of their services to their master in a record book that was available to the police for scrutiny and inspection. It was abolished in 1918. For a scathing critique of this law and its impact on society, see Clara Zetkin's report of the servant-girls' strike of 1899 (Jones and Lewis (eds.) 2015, pp. 8–13).

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(c) Restriction of the working day to six hours for workers under the age of 18.
(d) Prohibition of night work, except in those industries that, by their nature, require night work for technical reasons or for reasons of public welfare.
(e) An uninterrupted rest period of at least 36 hours per week for every worker.
(f) Prohibition of the truck system.

2. Monitoring of all industrial enterprises and regulation of working conditions in the cities and countryside by a Reich labour department, district labour bureaus, chambers of labour and trade inspectors elected by the workers. Rigorous industrial hygiene.
3. Equality of agricultural labourers and domestic servants with industrial workers; abolition of the Prussian Servants' Law.
4. Safeguarding of the freedom of association.
5. Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers' insurance, with full autonomy for the workers.

The Erfurt Programme

(c) Prohibition of night work, except in those industries that, by their nature, require night work for technical reasons or for reasons of public welfare;
(d) An uninterrupted rest period of at least 36 hours per week for every worker;
(e) Prohibition of the truck system.

2. Monitoring of all industrial enterprises and regulation of working conditions in the cities and countryside by a Reich labour department, district labour bureaus, chambers of labour and trade inspectors elected by the workers. Rigorous industrial hygiene.
3. Legal equality of agricultural labourers and domestic servants with industrial workers; abolition of the Prussian Servants' Law.
4. Safeguarding of the freedom of association.
5. Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers' insurance, with decisive participation by the workers in its administration.

The Erfurt Programme (*Adopted in 1891 by the Erfurt Congress of the* SPD)

1. The economic development of bourgeois society invariably leads to the ruin of small business, which is based on the private ownership by the worker of his means of production. It separates the worker from his means of production and

turns him into a propertyless proletarian, while the means of production become the monopoly of a relatively small number of capitalists and large landowners.

2. Hand-in-hand with this monopolisation of the means of production, there is the displacement of these fractured small businesses by colossal enterprises, the development of the tool into a machine, the gigantic growth in the productivity of human labour. But all the benefits of this transformation are monopolised by the capitalists and large landowners. For the proletariat and the sinking middle classes – petty bourgeoisie and farmers – it means an increase in the insecurity of their existence, of misery, of pressure, of oppression, of degradation, of exploitation.
3. Ever greater becomes the number of proletarians, ever more massive the army of excess workers, ever more stark the contradiction between exploiters and the exploited, ever more bitter the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which divides modern society into two hostile camps and constitutes the common characteristic of all industrialised countries.
4. The gulf between the propertied and the propertyless is further widened by crises that are grounded in the nature of the capitalist mode of production, crises that are becoming more extensive and more devastating, that elevate this general uncertainty into the normal state of society and furnish proof that the powers of productivity have grown beyond society's control, that the private ownership of the means of production has become incompatible with their appropriate application and full development.
5. The private ownership of the means of production, once the means for securing for the producer the ownership of his product, has today become the means for expropriating farmers, artisans and small merchants, and for putting the non-workers – capitalists, large landowners – into possession of the product of the workers. Only the transformation of the capitalist private ownership of the means of production – land and soil, pits and mines, raw materials, tools, machines, means of transportation – into social property and the transformation of the production of goods into socialist production carried on by and for society can cause the large enterprise and the constantly growing productivity of social labour to change for the hitherto exploited classes from a source of misery and oppression into a source of the greatest welfare and universal, harmonious advancement.
6. This social transformation amounts to the emancipation not only of the proletariat, but of the entire human race, which is suffering from current conditions. But it can only be the work of the working class, because all other classes, notwithstanding the conflicts of interest between them, stand on the ground of the private ownership of the means of production and have as their common goal the preservation of the foundations of contemporary society.

7. The struggle of the working class against capitalist exploitation is necessarily a political struggle. Without political rights, the working class cannot carry on its economic struggles and develop its economic organisation.
8. It cannot bring about the transfer of the means of production into the possession of the community without first having obtained political power. It is the task of the Social Democratic Party to shape the struggle of the working class into a conscious and unified one and to point out the inherent necessity of its goals.
9. The interests of the working class are the same in all countries with a capitalist mode of production. With the expansion of global commerce, and of production for the world market, the position of the worker in every country becomes increasingly dependent on the position of workers in others. The emancipation of the working class is thus a task in which the workers of all civilised countries are equally involved. Recognising this, the German Social Democratic Party feels and declares itself to be one with the class-conscious workers of all other countries.
10. The German Social Democratic Party therefore does not fight for new class privileges and class rights, but for the abolition of class rule and of classes themselves, for equal rights and equal obligations for all, without distinction of sex or race. Starting from these views, it fights not only the exploitation and oppression of wage workers in society today, but every manner of exploitation and oppression, whether directed against a class, party, sex, or race.
11. Proceeding from these principles, the German Social Democratic Party demands first of all:
    1. Universal, equal, and direct suffrage with secret ballot in all elections, for all citizens of the Reich over the age of 20, without distinction of sex. Proportional representation, and, until this is introduced, legal redistribution of electoral districts after every census. Two-year legislative periods. Elections to be held on a legal holiday. Compensation for elected representatives. Suspension of every restriction on political rights, except in the case of legal incapacity.
    2. Direct legislation by the people by means of the rights of proposal and rejection. Self-determination and self-government of the people in Reich, state, province and municipality. Election by the people of magistrates, who are answerable and liable to them. Annual voting of taxes.
    3. Education of all to bear arms. Militia in the place of the standing army. The representative body of the people to determine questions of war and peace. Settlement of all international disputes by arbitration.
    4. Abolition of all laws that place women at a disadvantage compared with men in matters of public or private law.
    5. Abolition of all laws that limit or suppress the free expression of opinion and restrict or suppress the right of association and assembly. Declaration

that religion is a private matter. Abolition of all expenditures from public funds for ecclesiastical and religious purposes. Ecclesiastical and religious communities are to be regarded as private associations that regulate their affairs entirely autonomously.

6. Secularisation of schools. Compulsory attendance at the public extended elementary school. Free education, free educational materials, and free meals in the public *Volksschulen*, as well as in the higher educational institutions for those boys and girls considered qualified for further education by virtue of their abilities.
7. Free administration of justice and free legal assistance. Administration of the law by judges elected by the people. Appeal in criminal cases. Compensation for individuals unjustly accused, imprisoned, or sentenced. Abolition of capital punishment.
8. Free medical care, including midwifery and medicines. Free burial.
9. Graduated income and property tax to pay for all public expenditures, insofar as they are to be paid for by taxation. Inheritance tax, graduated according to the size of the inheritance and the degree of kinship. Abolition of all indirect taxes, customs and other economic and political measures that sacrifice the interests of the community to those of a privileged few.

For the protection of the working class, the German Social Democratic Party demands first of all:

1. Effective national and international worker-protection laws/legislation on the following basis:
   (a) Fixing of a normal working day of no more than eight hours
   (b) Prohibition of gainful employment for children under the age of fourteen;
   (c) Prohibition of night work, except in those industries that, by their nature, require night work for technical reasons or for reasons of public welfare;
   (d) An uninterrupted rest period of at least 36 hours per week for every worker;
   (e) Prohibition of the truck system.
2. Monitoring of all industrial enterprises and regulation of working conditions in the cities and countryside by a Reich labour department, district labour bureaus, chambers of labour and trade inspectors elected by the workers. Rigorous industrial hygiene.
3. Legal equality of agricultural labourers and domestic servants with industrial workers; abolition of the Prussian Servants' Law.
4. Safeguarding of the freedom of association.
5. Takeover by the Reich government of the entire system of workers' insurance, with decisive participation by the workers in its administration.[4]

4 The drafts of the programme have been translated from the Appendix to Gilcher-Holtey 1986.

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